

# Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition

The *Nihon ryōiki* of the Monk Kyōkai

Translated and annotated with an introduction by

KYOKO MOTOMOCHI NAKAMURA

CURZON

First published in 1973  
by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

This edition published by Curzon Press  
St John's Studios, Church Road, Richmond  
Surrey, TW9 2QA

© 1997 Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura

Printed in Great Britain by  
Biddles Limited, Guildford and Kings Lynn

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-7007-0449-3

## Translator's Preface

In the various publications of the "new religions" in Japan, many stories about the miraculous karmic retribution of good and evil are reported side by side with sophisticated discussions of the doctrines and management of the organizations. Some intellectuals tend to condemn these stories as vulgar expressions of a concern for material benefits; however, one cannot deny the fact that the miraculous events related in the stories often generate and deepen faith in those who have witnessed, heard, or read them. Why do such stories appeal to so many minds in this century? Is the world of the miraculous totally foreign to us who live in the nuclear age?

To put great trust in a literal statement and little in a mythological one is a prejudice, which, although increasingly being challenged, is still very strong. In the field of the history of religions, insufficient work has been done on the folk piety that is oriented around the miraculous in different religious traditions, and this tendency leads to a misunderstanding of both the medieval world and contemporary man.

Recently I had a chance to observe the reaction of some Catholics when the list of approved and recognized saints was revised. The Vatican released the new calendar which had dropped or reclassified about two hundred saints, including such popular ones as St. Nicolas and St. Christopher, in an attempt to drop historically obscure saints, thus separating pious legends and local devotions from the central tradition of the saints of the Church. Even if few Catholics literally believed in the historicity of all the saints, many were dissatisfied with the way Vatican authorities had handled these matters relating to their faith. Not only the lay people but also representatives of the Eastern Catholic churches criticized the move to reclassify the saints. Such an example suggests that there is common ground between the folk piety of Catholics in a modern Western city and that of Buddhists in a medieval Asian village. My interest lies in this common human experience, understood within its different historical and cultural settings.

The present work consists of two parts: an introductory essay followed by an annotated translation of the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記,<sup>1</sup>

1. *Nihon* (*Nippon*) *reiiki* is the alternative reading. Its full title is *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki* 日本國現報善惡靈異記 (Miraculous Stories of Karmic Retribution of Good and Evil in Japan) [hereafter *Nihon ryōiki*].



which was compiled in the ninth century in Japan. I chose this collection of legends for several reasons. First, it offers illustrations of religious phenomena whose interpretation is helpful for a better understanding of human experience. Second, the *Nihon ryōiki* is the earliest collection of Buddhist legends in Japan, and its influence on later literature is significant. Third, it is a key document for understanding how Buddhism was accepted by the Japanese in the first few centuries after its introduction. In other words, this document was produced through the interaction of the Buddhist tradition with the Japanese indigenous tradition. And, finally, these legends have a charm of their own; apart from their doctrinal significance, they are both enjoyable and informative.

The *Nihon ryōiki* is a product of the Buddhist tradition as it took root in Japanese soil. The author Kyōkai 景戒<sup>2</sup> was moved to compile these stories both by a sense of awe of the Buddhist *dharma*<sup>3</sup> and by a sense of the wonder of the world. He lived a monastic life at a temple called Yakushi-ji 薬師寺, one of the great state temples in Nara,<sup>4</sup> during a period of political change when the capital was in the process of being moved from Nara to Nagaoka and then to Kyoto. His work served as a source from which his fellow monks might draw "true stories" to illustrate their popular preaching. It has also become the source of later legendary literature in Japan, many of its motifs reappearing in more elaborate and polished forms. It is quoted by historians and folklorists in their attempts to reconstruct the history and popular Buddhism of the Nara period. So far, however, insufficient attention has been given to interpreting the work as an illustration of how people in early Japan oriented themselves in the world. For this reason I have attempted in the introduction to place these tales in their cultural and historical context and have emphasized their cosmic orientation rather than their specific doctrinal significance.

The *Nihon ryōiki* is divided into three *kan* or volumes. Although no complete manuscript of the work has been preserved, several critical editions of the text have been published since the nineteenth century, most of which are based on the first critical text made by Kariya Ekisai 狩谷棧齋 (1775–1835).<sup>5</sup> In the recent work by Takeda Yūkichi

2. Keikai is the alternative reading, according to the *kan'on* or so-called Han pronunciation.

3. Skt., meaning elements of existence, universal law, the teaching of Buddha. Hereafter *dharma* is treated as an English word.

4. Located at present Nishinokyo-machi, Nara-shi 奈良市西京町. See Chap. I(1)c.

5. *Kōhon Nihon ryōiki* 校本日本靈異記 (1816); *Nihon ryōiki kōshō* 日本靈異記攷證 (1821); reprinted in the *Gunsho ruijū* 群書類從, XVI, Book 447 (1894); *Kariya Ekisai zenshū*, 2 vols. (1925); *Shinkō gunsho ruijū*, XIX (1932, 1939).

武田祐吉,<sup>6</sup> and in the joint work of Endō Yoshimoto 遠藤嘉基 and Kasuga Kazuo 春日和男,<sup>7</sup> a forward step was made by using a newly discovered Kōfukuji manuscript as the basic text for the first of the three volumes.<sup>8</sup>

The *Nihon ryōiki* was introduced to the West in 1934 through Herman Böhner's elaborate and scholarly German translation,<sup>9</sup> but because of the outbreak of the Second World War, Böhner's work received only limited attention. His translation is faithful to the text of Kariya's critical edition. I have chosen the most recently edited text of Endō and Kasuga, for I find it the most comprehensive and critical.<sup>10</sup> A bibliography of the many excellent works of specialists in textual criticism and philology appears at the end of this work. Without these works I could never have undertaken this translation.

I am responsible for all paragraphing and punctuation since the original text lacks any division beyond that into stories. Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese words are retained in cases where translation might lead to misunderstanding. Chinese characters are generally given after the first transcription of a particular noun, a title of a quoted work, or an important term. English translations of technical terms are explained in the footnotes or identified in Appendix C. Difficulties in determining the actual pronunciation used in the age of the *Nihon ryōiki*<sup>11</sup> have prompted me to follow the readings given by Endō and Kasuga for personal and local names, and the *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*<sup>12</sup>

6. *Nihon ryōiki* (*Nihon koten zensho* 日本古典全書, 1950).

7. *Nihon ryōiki* (NKBT, 70, 1967).

8. The Kōfukuji manuscript discovered in 1922 has only the first volume, but is the oldest (904) of all the extant manuscripts. See Chap. I(1)b, n. 26.

Vol.	Kariya text	Nos. of tales	Takeda text	Nos. of tales	Endō & Kasuga text	Nos. of tales
I	Kōyasan ms.	31	Kōfukuji ms.	35	Kōfukuji ms.	35
II	Shinobazu-bunko ms.	42	Shinobazu-bunko ms.	42	Shinpukuji ms.	42
III	Shinobazu-bunko ms.	39	Shinobazu-bunko ms.	39	Shinpukuji ms.	39
	total	112	total	116	total	116

9. "Legenden aus der Frühzeit des Japanischen Buddhismus," 2 vols., *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, XXVII (1934–35).

10. As to the first volume, the choice falls on the Kōfukuji ms. due to the fact it is the oldest and best preserved; while, as to the second and third, the Shinobazu-bunko ms., a critically edited text of the Shinpukuji ms., was adopted by several scholars, and the recent work of Endō and Kasuga is a new attempt to adopt the Shinpukuji ms. as its basis. Endō and Kasuga, who had found the Shinobazu-bunko ms. unsatisfactory, followed the established practice of textual criticism, adopting the manuscript closest to the source.

11. Tsukishima Hiroshi 築島裕, *Heian jidaigo shinron* 平安時代語新論, 404–410.

12. Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙, ed. *佛書解説大辭典*, 12 vols. (1933).



for titles of Buddhist scriptures. Japanese words are transcribed according to the system adopted in *Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*,<sup>13</sup> and Chinese words, according to *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary*.<sup>14</sup> All historical dates in this work follow the lunar calendar. For full information concerning the works referred to in the notes, see the bibliography.

I hope that this work will serve as a clue to the better understanding of the Japanese tradition which has partly survived even to this day in various spheres of life.

## Acknowledgments

I began my study of the *Nihon ryōiki* when writing a thesis at the University of Tokyo. If my work displays any merits, credit should be given to the professors in the Department of the Study of Religion there, as well as in the Department of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago, where I spent two stimulating years, 1960–1962, under the guidance of Professors Mircea Eliade and Joseph M. Kitagawa.

I am grateful to the Radcliffe Institute for providing a fellowship grant, 1968–1970, and in particular to the late Dean Constance E. Smith for her encouragement in preparing this work for publication. I am greatly indebted to Professor Masatoshi Nagatomi of Harvard University and to Dr. Glen W. Baxter, associate director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, who encouraged me to carry out this project and offered valuable suggestions. My sincere thanks go to Professor Burton Watson of Columbia University who kindly read the entire manuscript and made numerous suggestions and corrections; to Professors Virginia Corwin of Smith College and H. Byron Earhart of Western Michigan University who read portions of my draft to help me improve it. I owe much to Dr. and Mrs. Minor Rogers for their constant help in my struggle to write in English. Also, I should like to express my gratitude to Miss M. Rita Howe, editor at the Harvard University Press, whose patient work greatly improved my manuscript. Without the help of my friends I could not have completed this work.

This work is dedicated to my father, Tetsunosuke Motomochi, who passed away in 1962 before I could return from Chicago.

Tokyo, Japan  
Spring 1972

Kyoko Motomochi Nakamura

13. *Kenkyūsha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*, ed. by Senkichi Katsumata (1954).

14. *Mathew's Chinese-English Dictionary* (American Revised ed., 1943), ed. by R. H. Mathews.



# ERRATA

	(incorrect)	(correct)
p. vii note 8 last column	"Kōfukuji ms. Shinpuku- ji ms.	"Kōfukuji ms. Shinpuku- ji ms.
p. 4 note 7 first line	"Founder of the Tendai 天台 "	"Founder of the Tendai 天台 "
p. 20 fourth line	"apparent"	Remove a dot under "e".
p. 69 11th line	"Taika Reform (645) and"	"Taika Reform (645) which"
20th line	"and women appear in"	"and women appear"
p. 99 last line	"tures have been. . . ."	"tures <sup>12</sup> have been . . . ."
p. 101 note 24	Insert "Rokudoshūkyō, v. 4 (Taishō, III. p. 17c)." before "See Chap. (2)a, n. 139."	
p. 133 note 6 first line	"He went to China"	"He went to India"
p. 171 8th line	"Bodhisattva Nyūzai"	"Bodhisattva Nyōzai"
p. 210 3rd line	"Shimotsuke-dera"	"Shimotsukenodera"
p. 233 (Story) 9	title missing	<i>On King Yama Showing an Extraordinary Sign and Advising That People Practice Good</i>
p. 235 6th & 7th lines	"to atone for her suffering and save her."	"redeem her from her suffering."
p. 246 2nd line	a period missing	"sitting in the same place. Then . . ."
4th line from b. last word	"th"	"the"
p. 248 2nd line	first word "Kegon-gyo"	"Kegon-gyō"
11th & 12th lines	Delete two duplicating lines.	
p. 264 7th line	Delete "he" duplicating.	
p. 298 14th line from b.	<i>Sange ōjōki</i> 三多往生記	<i>Sange ōjōki</i> 三外往生記
p. 299 2nd line from b.	(Agu in)	(Agu-i/-in)

# Contents

## Part One Introduction to the *Nihon ryōiki*

### Abbreviations 2

Chapter I Background	3
(1) Kyōkai, the Author	3
a. His Life and His Motive	
b. Date of Compilation and Authorship	
c. Yakushi-ji and the Six Nara Schools	
d. State Control of the Samgha and Popular Buddhist Movements	
(2) Influence of Earlier Writings	29
a. Doctrine of Karma and Samsara	
b. The Influence of Chinese Buddhist Literature	
c. Japanese Legendary Literature	

Chapter II World View Reflected	45
(1) Cosmic Order	45
a. Rites of Cosmic Renewal	
b. Symbolism of the Visit to the Other World	
c. Paradise and Hell: Good and Evil	
(2) Man and Power	60
a. What Makes Man Human	
b. Woman as a Cosmic Symbol	
c. Ideal Image of Man	
(3) Miraculous World	80
a. Belief in the Spirits of the Dead	
b. Wonder of the Three Treasures	

## Part Two Annotated Translation of the *Nihon ryōiki*

Volume I Contents	95
Preface	99
Tales 1-35	102
Volume II Contents	153
Preface	157
Tales 1-42	158



Volume III	Contents	217
	Preface	221
	Tales 1-39	223
Appendix A.	Chronology	289
B.	Imperial Family Lineage	293
C.	Translated Ranks and Titles	294
D.	Buddhist Scriptures Quoted or Referred to in the <i>Nihon ryōiki</i>	295
E.	Chronological List of Major Japanese Works of Legendary Literature during the Heian- Kamakura Periods	298
Selected Bibliography		301
Index		319

PART ONE

Introduction to the *Nihon ryōiki*



## ABBREVIATIONS

DBZ	<i>Dainihon Bukkyō zensho</i> 大日本佛教全書
ERE	<i>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics</i>
HJAS	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
IEK	<i>Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū</i> 印度學佛教學研究
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
NKBT	<i>Nihon koten bungaku taikei</i> 日本古典文学大系
SBE	<i>Sacred Books of the East</i>
SGR	<i>Shinkō gunsho ruijū</i> 新校群書類從
SPTK	<i>Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an</i> 四部叢刊
SZKT	<i>Shintei zōho kokushi taikei</i> 新訂増補國史大系
Taishō	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i> 大正新脩大藏經
TASJ	<i>Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan</i>
TPJS	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society</i>
ZGR	<i>Zoku gunsho ruijū</i> 續群書類從
Ch.	Chinese
Ja.	Japanese
Skt.	Sanskrit

Chap. I(1)a A cross-reference to Part One, referring to chapter, section, and subsection.

I.1 A cross-reference to Part Two, referring to volume and tale.

## Background

### (I) KYŌKAI, THE AUTHOR

#### a. *His Life and His Motive*

The *Nihon ryōiki* compiled by Kyōkai, a monk of Yakushi-ji, is the earliest collection of Buddhist legends in Japan. Nothing is known of his life except what is revealed in this single work. Although his biography is found in the *Honchō kōsō-den* 本朝高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan) compiled by Shibā 師蠻 in 1702, all that is said about him is:

The birthplace of the monk, Kyōkai, is not known. He lived at Yakushi-ji, and espoused the teaching of the Yuishiki 唯識 School as his doctrinal base. In addition to Buddhist studies he compiled the *Ryōiki*, in the preface of which he says. . . .<sup>1</sup>

As the passage which follows consists of a quotation from the *Nihon ryōiki*, it will be seen that this "biography" fails to reveal even the birth and death dates or the birthplace of the subject. Some scholars assume that he came from Kii 紀伊 province, because that is the location of several legends recorded in his work, those which can be dated approximately within his lifetime and which offer precise local names of the area.<sup>2</sup> Probably we would be safe in surmising that he was from a province in or near Kinai 畿内, where most of the legends originated.<sup>3</sup> His signature, "Kyōkai, a monk<sup>4</sup> of Yakushi-ji on the West Side of Nara," is found at the beginning of each volume and at the end of the third volume. Only the last of these signatures specifies his clerical rank, *Dentō jū-i* 傳燈住位, next to the lowest of the five clerical ranks.<sup>5</sup>

1. Shibā, *Honchō kōsōden*, VI (DBZ, 102), 125-126.

2. Hashikawa Tadashi, "Ryōiki no kenkyū," *Geibun*, XIII (No. 3, 1922), 194.

3. Takase Shōgon, *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki* (*Kokuyaku issaikyō*, Shiden-bu, XXIV), 19-23. Kinai is the area comprising the five home provinces of the Yamato court; they are Yamato 大和, Settsu 攝津, Kawachi 河内, Izumi 和泉, and Yamashiro 山城.

4. Skt. *śramaṇa*, transliterated as *sha-men* 沙門, 桑門, etc., in Chinese and *shamon* in Japanese, originally means "ascetic, recluse," and is later used in the same sense as *biku* 比丘 (Skt. *bhikṣu*), a (Buddhist) monk. In this work the Japanese terms *shamon*, *sō* 僧 (see below, n. 17), and *biku* are all translated as "monk," since they are used interchangeably in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

5. *Dentō daihōshi-i* 傳燈大法師位 (Rank of the Great Master of Transmission of Light), *Dentō hōshi-i* 傳燈法師位 (Rank of the Master of Transmission of Light), *Dentō mari-i* 傳燈滿位 (Senior Rank of Transmission of Light), *Dentō jū-i* 傳燈住位 (Junior Rank of Transmission of Light), and *Dentō nyū-i* 傳燈入位 (Initiatory Rank of Transmission of Light) correspond, respectively, to court ranks from three to seven (see II.35, n. 7). The clerical ranks were instituted in 760, in the reign of Emperor Jun'nin. See *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀, XXIV (Tenpyō hōji 4:7:23).



Shiban must have assumed that because Kyōkai lived at Yakushi-ji, he studied the Yuishiki teachings since Yakushi-ji had been the center of the Yuishiki School.<sup>6</sup> By Kyōkai's lifetime, however, the sectarian administrative structure was still rudimentary. Temples were not yet affiliated with particular sects but were, rather, Buddhist institutes for the study of several different doctrines. On the other hand, Kyōkai might well have witnessed a sectarian consciousness growing among scholar monks at Yakushi-ji in response to the challenge of the new Buddhist teachings introduced by Saichō 最澄 (767–822)<sup>7</sup> and Kūkai 空海 (744–835),<sup>8</sup> who were favored by the court. Kyōkai seems to have been interested in the new teachings as offering a more comprehensive way to happiness (III.38). In any event, he chose not to identify himself with the eminent monks at Nara, who attempted to maintain their leadership by revitalizing the traditional doctrinal learning in the face of these two new schools.

Kyōkai's autobiographical passages, which are found in the latter section of Tale 38 in Volume III, were unavailable to Shiban because the Kōyasan manuscript of the *Nihon ryōiki*, which Shiban used, lacked Tale 38 and eleven other stories. Shiban's knowledge of Kyōkai was limited, therefore, to the few lines quoted above. We may conclude that the only dependable information on Kyōkai's life is to be found in the *Nihon ryōiki*, primarily the autobiographical sections, the three prefaces at the beginning of each volume, and the postscript at the end of Volume III. What do these passages tell us about his life? In the second half of Tale 38, the following dated events are mentioned:

Year	Era	Event
787	Enryaku 6:9:4 <sup>9</sup>	He was stricken with remorse in the evening and dreamed at night of a novice monk <sup>10</sup> named Kyō-nichi 鏡日.

6. Skt. *viññaptimātratā*, "consciousness only," is the tenet of the Yuishiki or Hossō 法相 School which asserts that all phenomena are produced from seeds stored in the *ālayavijñāna*, a sort of "reserve consciousness." The founder of this school in China is Hsüan-tsang 玄奘 (c. 596–664); the Japanese monk Dōshō 道昭 (照) (629–700), who studied under Hsüan-tsang in China, is considered the founder in Japan (I.22).

7. Founder of the Tendai 天台 School, known posthumously as Dengyō Daishi 傳教大師. He was sent by an imperial decree to study at Mt. T'ien t'ai, the headquarters of the T'ien t'ai School in China for one year (804–805).

8. Founder of the Shingon 真言 School, known posthumously as Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師. He studied in China for two years (804–806) and advocated esoteric Buddhist teachings.

9. The numbers mean 6th year, 9th month, 4th day of the Enryaku era. See Appendix A.

10. *Shami* 沙彌, transliterated from Skt. *śrāmaṇera*, means a monk below the age of ordination who keeps the ten precepts (see Chap. I(1)d, n. 87); the *Nihon ryōiki* also uses the term to mean a monk who leads a householder's life and does not strictly follow the precepts, regardless of age.

788	Enryaku 7:3:17	He dreamed of his own death.
795	Enryaku 14:12:30	He was awarded Junior Rank of Transmission of Light.
797	Enryaku 16:12:17	His son died.
800	Enryaku 19:1:12, 25	His horses died.

One autumn evening in 787 Kyōkai reflected on his poverty-stricken life filled with cravings and burning desires, and lamented his past *karma*.<sup>11</sup> He sighed with remorse, dozed off, and dreamed what he took to be a revelation from the Buddha. In the dream he was called on by a mendicant named Kyōnichi. The mendicant showed him a huge flat board on which were marked the heights of several men, their stature being indicative of their relative merits. According to Kyōkai's interpretation, the mendicant was none other than an embodiment of Kannon 觀音,<sup>12</sup> who had come to teach him that man possesses the Buddha-nature, and that, by adding to it wisdom and practice, he can erase past karma and thereby gain happiness. The mendicant, whose begging was an expression of the great mercy of Kannon, gave him an anthology of Buddhist scriptures in order that he might cultivate wisdom, and then disappeared.

In the following year Kyōkai had a second mysterious dream in which he died and was cremated while his spirit observed the whole procedure as an onlooker. Kyōkai did not interpret this dream, but simply remarked that it might be an omen indicating the attainment of long life or a particular rank since dreams sometimes depict the opposite of what is to follow. We do not know whether he lived a long life, but eventually, in 795, he was honored with the second lowest clerical rank.

From these accounts Kyōkai must have entered the priesthood sometime between 787 and 795, perhaps near the time of his second dream in 788, since several years must have passed in the priesthood before he received even the second lowest rank. That Kyōkai did not give any specific information as to when and how he entered the priesthood is in strange contrast with the exact dates and detailed description given for his dreams and for the death of his son and of the

11. Skt. meaning deeds: it is a common Hindu-Buddhist belief that each individual existence is conditioned by past deeds and that every action must bear fruit for the doer. See Chap. I(2)a. Hereafter *karma* is treated as an English word.

12. Or Kanzeon 觀世音 (Ch. Kuan-yin or Kuan-shih-yin), the equivalent of Skt. Avalokitasvara, which means "the one who hears the sounds of the world"; another name, Kanjizai 觀自在 (Ch. Kuan-tzu-tsai) is equivalent to Avalokiteśvara, which means "the onlooking lord," or "the lord who is manifested." Hindu and Iranian influences are evident in the development of the cult of Kannon, who appears in many Mahayana scriptures as a *bodhisattva* (hereafter this will be treated as an English word) of great mercy, and who has been continuously popular among Mahayana Buddhists. See Chap. II(3)b.



horses. However, since Tale 38 of Volume III was given the heading "On the Appearance of Evil and Good Omens Which Were Later Followed by Their Results," and as it is likely that this section was written not as autobiography but to illustrate the interrelationship between Heaven and human beings, he may have deliberately omitted details irrelevant to the theme.

Since our sources are limited, these two dreams must serve as the primary clues to Kyōkai's decision to pursue the spiritual life. The first dream seems to have roused him from the "web of delusion" by widening his vision from a self-centered love to a universal love for all sentient beings. As a result of what Kannon revealed to him, he came to understand the working of the principle of karma. It is possible that he remained silent about the second dream, refraining from interpreting it in Buddhist terms, because it expressed symbols not uniquely Buddhist but universal in character. In many religious traditions the reduction of the body to bones symbolizes the death and rebirth of man, that is, the total transformation and mystical rebirth of a new man. By being reduced to bones, man can be liberated from the human condition. In the Buddhist tradition, the symbol of death, rebirth, and initiation are prominent: "Buddha taught the way and the means of dying to the human condition, to bondage and suffering, in order to be reborn to the freedom, the bliss, and the unconditionality of *nirvāṇa*."<sup>13</sup>

In 787, the year of his first dream, Kyōkai was still a layman, but he must have been familiar with the *Shokyō yōshū* 諸經要集 (Essentials of All Sūtras),<sup>14</sup> which was given to him in his dream by the mendicant Kyōnichī. This means that his spiritual pilgrimage must have begun earlier.<sup>15</sup> We have assumed that he entered the priesthood in the following year, soon after the second dream, and it seems that entering the priesthood represented a way for him to seek a happier life by gaining knowledge of the law of causation.

"Aspire to wisdom, and guide all sentient beings" is an important Mahayana Buddhist maxim which Kyōkai espoused. It was believed

13. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 166. In his *Birth and Rebirth* (p. 105), he says, "In another Tantric meditation, the novice imagines that he is being stripped of his flesh and finally sees himself as a 'huge, white, shining skeleton.'" Hereafter *nirvāṇa* will be treated as an English word.

14. Tao-shih: 道世, *Chu-ching yao-chi* (Taishō, LIV, No. 2123), 81-194.

15. Kurano Kenji, "Nihon ryōiki kō," *Bungaku* II (No. 12, 1934), 751-766; reprinted in the *Koten to jōdai seishin*. He asserts that the *Nihon ryōiki* was compiled by Kyōkai in 787, and that sections dated later than this were added by others. Although the text as we have it now was most likely compiled during the Kōnin era (810-824), it is agreed that 787 was an epoch-making year in Kyōkai's life, and it might indicate the beginning of the compilation of the *Nihon ryōiki*.

that enlightenment could be attained by devotion to Buddha and mercy for all fellow beings. Thus, he brought together the tales of the *Nihon ryōiki* as a step toward such enlightenment:

By editing these stories of miraculous events I want to pull people forward by the ears, offer my hand to lead them to good, and show them how to cleanse their feet of evil. My sincere hope is that we may all be reborn in the western land of bliss, leaving no one on the earth, and live together in the jeweled palace in heaven, abandoning our earthly residence [III. Preface].

Although Kyōkai belonged to Yakushi-ji, one of the greatest centers of Buddhist studies, and was honored with clerical rank, he was conscious of a gap between scholarly monks and common devotees with whom he often identified himself. He showed great sympathy for lay devotees whose simple, direct faith he admired, and he was determined to "guide all sentient beings" to the western land of bliss<sup>16</sup> in spite of his own limitations.

By the time Kyōkai came to live at Yakushi-ji, state control of the Buddhist *samgha*<sup>17</sup> had gradually been strengthened. Emperor Kōnin (r. 770-781) exiled Dōkyō 道鏡, who had been appointed *Dharma King* 法王<sup>18</sup> by Empress Shōtoku<sup>19</sup> in 766 and who almost usurped the throne after the empress died (III.38). Emperor Kanmu, who had succeeded Emperor Kōnin, transferred the capital from Nara to Kyoto in order to sever traditional ties between the court and the temples in Nara. During the twenty-five years of his reign he issued more than fifty decrees concerning Buddhist temples and monks, a number unparalleled in Japanese history. More than thirty of these decrees were apparently intended to correct the evils and injustices found in the *samgha*. One decree issued in 798 states that there were many temples

16. Skt. *sukhāvati* translated as *gokuraku* 極樂, *jōdo* 淨土, *amrakukoku* 安樂國, etc.; Amida's pure land in the west where devotees are reborn after death and live happily free from any desires. For the details of this land of bliss, see the *Larger and Smaller Sukhāvati-vyūha, Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts* (SBE, XLIX). Also see A.K. Reischauer, "Genshin's Ojo Yōshū: Collected Essays on Birth into Paradise," *TASJ*, Second Series, III (December 1930), 68-94. For Amida, see Chap. II(3)b, n. 132.

17. Transliterated as 僧伽, which is shortened into 僧; originally the community of Buddhist monks and nuns united by wisdom and practice for the purpose of reaching Buddhahood. It has both historical and transcendental aspects as one of the Three Treasures (Skt. *triratna*). In the Mahayana tradition it includes not only monks and nuns but also lay brothers and sisters. Hereafter *samgha* will be treated as an English word.

18. Skt. *dharmarāja*, originally an honorific title for the Buddha; in Japan *hōō* is used only for Prince Shōtoku (574-622) and Dōkyō. See *Jōgū Shōtoku hōō teisetsu* 上宮聖德法王帝説 (DBZ, 112), 43-48; *Shoku Nihongi*, XXVII (Tenpyō jingo 2: 10:20). Hereafter *dharma* will be treated as an English word, both as a title and a term.

19. Empress Kōken (r. 749-757) resumed the throne as Empress Shōtoku (r. 764-770) after banishing Emperor Jun'nin. Cf. Nakagawa Osamu, "Shōtoku-Dōkyō seiken no keisei katei," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 196 (1964), 41-55.



in the former capital of Heijō (Nara) where monks and nuns did not keep the Buddhist precepts.<sup>20</sup> Another decree issued in 804 notes that many monks in all provinces had failed to keep the precepts, and that some had maintained their family life after they were appointed to the high Buddhist position of lecturer.<sup>21</sup>

When we read the passage on the death of Kyōkai's son, one decree seems particularly relevant: "From now on all monks who have sons shall return to lay status so that they may set an example to future generations."<sup>22</sup> It was issued to correct the evils of the loose monastic life and to avoid giving special favors to the sons of high-ranking monks. Two years later a monk named Kyōkoku (Keikoku) 景國 of Yakushi-ji sought to conform to the spirit of this decree, and he petitioned to be allowed to return to lay status on the grounds that he was innately dull and incapable of studying.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Kyōkai knew of Kyōkoku's petition and departure since they had lived at the same temple about the same time. How did Kyōkai feel about himself, a monk of a clerical rank, who was not separated completely from his family? He might well have wanted to clarify his motivation for joining the sangha and to maintain his clerical position free from family ties. The brief glimpses of his life end with the note that his horses died in 800, and we recall an article of the *Sōni-ryō* 僧尼令 (Ordinances concerning Monks and Nuns) which states that monks and nuns shall not receive any slaves,<sup>24</sup> horses, oxen, or weapons as offerings.<sup>25</sup> It is difficult to know how conscious he was of these laws and how desirous of living up to them, but there is evidence in the *Nihon ryōiki* that he intended to make his renunciation complete and to clarify his status as a member of the sangha. The detailed description of his dreams suggests that he was led to renounce lay status by the revelation of the great mercy of Buddha.

The *Nihon ryōiki* gives no information on his latter years, but he

20. *Ruijū kokushi* 類從國史, 186 (Enryaku 17:7:28).

21. *Ibid.*, 186 (Enryaku 23:1:11). The position of lecturer, *kōji* 講師, was instituted in 795, replacing that of provincial preceptor, *kokushi* 國師, a mature and venerable monk who expounded dharma and who was in charge of discipline for monks and nuns; also a learned monk who was appointed to lecture at court ceremonies. See *Ruijū sandaikyaku* 類從三代格, III (Enryaku 14:8:13, 24:12:25).

22. *Ruijū sandaikyaku*, XIX (Enryaku 17:9:17).

23. *Ruijū kokushi*, 187 (Enryaku 19:8:15).

24. *Nuhi* 奴隸: one category of the unfree people, mostly manual workers or farm laborers, prescribed in the *Yōrō-ryō* 養老令 as hereditary status with no property rights but protected by law against injury (*Yōrō-ryō*, "Ko-ryō," Article 35). See Yoshida Akira, *Nihon kodai shakai kōsei shiron*, 297-364.

25. *Ryō no gige* 令義解, "Sōni-ryō," Article 26. See Chap. I(1)c; G.B. Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration," Part Two, *TASJ*, Second Series, XI (December 1934), 117-147.

must have lived until the reign of Emperor Saga (r. 809-823), at which time the narrative of the *Nihon ryōiki* ends.

#### b. Date of Compilation and Authorship

No single extant manuscript of the *Nihon ryōiki* contains the complete text of all three volumes. There are four manuscripts; the Kōfukuji manuscript of the first volume,<sup>26</sup> the Shinpukuji manuscript of the second and third volumes,<sup>27</sup> the Maeda (-ke) manuscript of the third volume,<sup>28</sup> and the Kōya manuscript of the three incomplete volumes.<sup>29</sup> They seem to have been transmitted independently of each other, and most of them appear to have been edited from different manuscripts.<sup>30</sup>

The most controversial passage in the *Nihon ryōiki* is the first part of the preface to the third volume, which is known as "Maeda (-ke) -bon itsubun" 前田(家)本逸文 (Unknown Passage of the Maeda Manuscript). It gives an exact date for the compilation of the *Nihon ryōiki* in the course of outlining a Buddhist eschatological view of history.

The Inner Scriptures show how good and evil deeds are repaid, while the Outer Writings show how good and bad fortunes bring merit and demerit. If we study all the discourses Śākyamuni made during his lifetime, we learn that there are three periods: first, the period of the true dharma (*shōbō* 正法), which lasts five hundred years; second, the period of the counterfeit dharma (*zōbō* 像法), lasting a thousand years; and third, the period of the degenerate dharma (*mappō* 末法), which continues for ten thousand years. By the fourth year of the hare, the sixth year of the Enryaku era, seventeen hundred and twenty-two years have passed since Buddha entered nirvana. Accordingly, we live in the age of the degenerate dharma following the first two periods. Now in Japan, by the sixth year of the Enryaku era, two hundred and thirty-six years have elapsed since the arrival of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

26. Ōya Tokujō, ed., *Kōfukuji Nihon ryōiki* (1934): oldest and most accurate of all the manuscripts, which can be dated in 904, although it was recopied later.

27. Koizumi Michi, ed. and annot., *Kōchū Shinpukuji-bon Nihon ryōiki, Kunitengo to kumen shiryō*, suppl. No. 22 (June 1962): dated in the Kamakura period (1192-1333) and less corrupt than the Maeda and Kōya mss., although some errors crept in since it was copied more than three times.

28. A photostatic copy of the Maeda ms. was published in the *Sonkyōkaku sōkan* 尊經閣叢刊 (No. 19, 1931). The manuscript is dated 1236, and was discovered in 1883. The first section of the preface to the third volume is found only in this manuscript.

29. Also known as Sanmaian 三昧院 ms., dated 1214. Although it has three volumes, it is incomplete and corrupt; it was lost in the 1930's or 1940's. See Nagai Yoshinori *Nihon Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, 139-146.

30. Koizumi Michi, *Nihon ryōiki* (NKB, 70), 8-21.



This passage offers a basis for the theory that Kyōkai wrote this preface and compiled the *Nihon ryōiki* during the Enryaku era (782–805), probably in the sixth year (787); accordingly, the stories dated later must be interpolations by others.<sup>31</sup> Scholars who assert that Kyōkai's compilation took place during the Kōnin era (810–824) regard the "Unknown Passage of the Maeda Manuscript" as an interpolation made by Kyōkai himself or a later forgery.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the theories for the date of compilation and the authorship of the "Unknown Passage" are intricately entangled, and neither has been documented convincingly. If we assume that the passage was written by Kyōkai himself in the sixth year of the Enryaku era, this becomes the first reference to Buddhist eschatological ideas in Japan.

That the text of the *Nihon ryōiki* suffers from poor editing is shown by the confused plots in some tales (II.16, 25, 42), the combination of two independent tales into one (I.4; III.1), the irrelevance of the editor's note to the story (I.4), and the inappropriateness of the quotations from the scriptures (II.13, 22). If, indeed, it was written by Kyōkai himself, it represents the accumulation of more than thirty years' effort, but it lacks unity. Some scholars point out that the term "mappō," meaning degenerate dharma,<sup>33</sup> is found in only one passage of the Maeda manuscript and does not occur in the rest of the work. Therefore, they conclude that mappō consciousness was alien to Kyōkai, and that the "Unknown Passage" is a later interpolation. It is further argued that mappō consciousness became prominent only toward the end of the Heian period, while the *Nihon ryōiki* was compiled at the beginning of this period. These arguments do not, however, rule out the possibility that Kyōkai wrote the controversial preface or that the passage reflects his knowledge of the concept of mappō.

The argument that mappō consciousness was alien to Kyōkai is called into question by evidence presented in the *Myōhōki* 冥報記.<sup>34</sup> This text, which influenced Kyōkai, does not use the term mappō, in spite of the author's obvious respect for Hsin-hsing 信行 (540–594), who

founded the Sect of the Three Stages.<sup>35</sup> Hsin-hsing stressed the teaching of the three stages of dharma and preached a Buddhist eschatological message to the common people. There is also ample evidence against the general argument that mappō consciousness became prominent only in late Heian times. Clearly, a Buddhist eschatology was known to many monks in both the Nara and Heian periods, even though it did not become a social force until the late Heian period. Kyōkai, being a monk, would surely have known of it.

In the "Unknown Passage," the author specifies five hundred years of true dharma and one thousand years of counterfeit dharma. He miscalculates when he says that seventeen hundred and twenty-two years have passed since the date of Buddha's nirvana which was widely thought to be 949 B.C. in the Chinese tradition,<sup>36</sup> since the sixth year of the Enryaku era, 789, falls on the seventeen hundred and thirty-sixth year. On the other hand, as he says that two hundred and thirty years have passed since the arrival of Buddhism in Japan, it becomes evident that he adopted 552 A.D. as the date of the introduction of Buddhism, for which the only source is the *Nihon shoki*.<sup>37</sup> Historians have speculated why the writer of this section of the *Nihon shoki*, probably Dōji 道慈,<sup>38</sup> chose 552 instead of 538, the latter date being generally accepted in the older traditions.<sup>39</sup> Some concluded that 552 was chosen because it was the first year of the age of degenerate dharma, assuming that Dōji adopted 949 B.C. as the date of Śākyamuni's nirvana and used the same time spans for the two periods, as did the author of the "Unknown Passage."

But, why was the first year of degenerate dharma chosen as the beginning of Buddhist history in Japan? According to Tamura Enchō, Dōji wanted to demonstrate the strength of Japanese Buddhism in overcoming the age of degenerate dharma, and to contrast it with Chinese Buddhism, which was showing signs of serious deterioration.<sup>40</sup> However, such an interpretation of Dōji's motivation is questionable when we consider his treatise "Gushi" 愚志 (A Fool's Idea), in which he deplored the condition of Buddhism in Japan as

31. See Chap. I(r)a, n. 15.

32. The theory of a later forgery originated with Itabashi Tomoyuki, "Nihon ryōiki no senjutsu nenji ni tsuite," *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, VII (No. 2, 1930), 132–142; "Ryōiki Enryaku yonen izen gensensetsu ni tsuite," *Bungaku*, III (No. 6, 1935), 757–764. The theory that the interpolation was made by Kyōkai himself is advocated by Sakaguchi Genshō, *Nihon Bukkyō bungaku josetsu*, 95–103.

33. In English, it is usually known as "the decline," "the end," or "the latter period of the law."

34. T'ang-lin 唐臨, *Ming-pao chi* (Records of Invisible Work of Karmic Retribution; *Taishō*, LI, No. 2082), 787b–802a. It begins with the story of Hsin-hsing (788a–c), which is followed by that of his disciple, Hui-ju 慧如 (788c).

35. Cf. Yabuki Keiki, *Sangaikyō no kenkyū*.

36. Concerning the date of Śākyamuni's nirvana there are two theories in the Chinese tradition: the *Chou i shu* 周異書 gives 949 B.C., while the *Li-tai san-pao chi* 歷代三寶記 gives 609 B.C.

37. *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, XIX (Kinmei 13:10) gives 552 as the year of the formal introduction of Buddhism, but contemporary scholars agree on the earlier date of 538. See W. G. Aston, "Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan," *TPJS*, suppl. I (1896), II, 65–67.

38. Inoue Kaoru, *Nihon kodai no seiji to shūkyō*, 189–258.

39. See "Gangōji garan engi narabini ruki shizaichō," *Nara ibun*, ed. by Takeuchi Rizō, I, 383, *Jōgū Shōtoku hō teisetsu* (DBZ, 112), 47.

40. Tamura, *Asuka Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 166–177.



he found it when he returned from China after seventeen years of study.<sup>41</sup> In the *Shoku Nihongi*, there are passages indicating that the Tenpyō era was regarded as the age of counterfeit dharma, the second of the three ages,<sup>42</sup> and Dōji might have been hoping for the restoration of dharma when he set the date of Buddhism's introduction to Japan in the first year of the third age, that of degenerate dharma. Kyōkai might have shared the view held by Dōji, who was known for his anti-Confucianism.<sup>43</sup> He had witnessed the effects of anti-Buddhist propaganda spread by Chinese Confucian scholars during his stay in China, but it had only deepened his great respect for the scholarship and discipline of Chinese Buddhists. He must have hoped that Japan as a country would achieve the Buddhist ideal.

In India, sectarian struggles and violations of precepts led to serious self-examination within the samgha. The theory of the three stages of dharma was formulated as a warning to monks against the danger of violating the precepts, which was believed to cause the destruction of dharma. In China, persecution of the Buddhists led to a similar process of self-examination.<sup>44</sup> Thus, a more deterministic view of history arose, which was gradually combined with the theory of the three stages of dharma. This is why the time spans allotted to each period vary in the different scriptures. They may be summarized as:

Theory	True dharma (years)	Counterfeit dharma (years)
A	500	1,000
B	500	500
C	1,000	1,000
D	1,000	500

Among the four theories, A and C were popular in China.<sup>45</sup>

These ideas were transmitted to Japan in the scriptures and through the accounts of student monks who studied in China. The *Daihōdō daijiki-kyō* 大方等大集經,<sup>46</sup> one of the scriptures from which the author

of the *Nihon ryōiki* may have derived the Buddhist eschatological concept, focuses on the age of degenerate dharma when monks fail to live up to the precepts and laymen lose faith, but at the same time stresses the eternal presence of true dharma which can be maintained with the help of *dhāraṇī*.<sup>47</sup> According to the *Daihōdō daijiki-kyō*, Buddha preached on the subject of the five periods, each lasting five hundred years: the first is the period of enlightenment; the second, that of meditation; the third, that of reciting and hearing scriptures; the fourth, that of building temples and pagodas; the fifth, that of disputes and the disappearance of dharma.<sup>48</sup> This periodization parallels theory C, which allots one thousand years to both the age of true dharma and the age of counterfeit dharma. There is a possibility that Dōji accepted this theory of five periods, along with theory C. If so, then 552 A.D. would mark the beginning of the fourth period, which fits well with the historical situation of the Nara period. Chikō 智光 (II. 7) and Zenshu 善珠 (III. 35, 38), two eminent monks whose lives are recorded in the *Nihon ryōiki*, adopted theory A, although neither wrote explicitly on the age of degenerate dharma. Saichō was the first Japanese monk to discuss the eschatological idea explicitly in terms of its relation to human existence.<sup>49</sup>

When Kyōkai, their contemporary, read the scriptures predicting the coming age of decadence of dharma, he understood it in the Japanese historical context of his time and must have felt a desire for salvation, which he states clearly in the prefaces and autobiographical sections. Throughout the Nara period there were power struggles, intrigues, and murders around the throne. The imperial patronage of Buddhism encouraged corruption among monks and embroiled them in politics, as in the case of Dōkyō. Flagrant violation of the precepts led to the promulgation of many decrees to bring about order. Since the *Nihon ryōiki* is full of the stories of men killing, stealing, and cheating, it is evident that Kyōkai recognized the decadence of his times. Such recognition did not, however, necessarily mean that he believed in the Buddhist eschatological theory. The sinfulness of human nature appeared to conflict with his fundamentally optimistic world view. At the end of his work he says:

47. 陀羅尼, mystic syllables which sustain the faith of their reciters; later this power expanded and was regarded as a talisman instrumental in achieving desires, a charm to bring about miracles, a means to attain Buddhahood; it was analogous to *mantra* 眞言. See L. A. Waddell, "The *Dhāraṇī* Cult in Buddhism," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift*, I (No. 2, 1912), 155-195; M. Eliade, *Yoga*, 212-216; Toganoo Shōun, *Mandara no kenkyū*, 429-468. Hereafter *dhāraṇī* will appear in its English form.

48. *Daihōdō daijiki-kyō* (*Taishō*, XIII), 363. Cf. Kazue Kyōichi, *Nihon no mappō shisō*, 17.

49. Tamura, *Nihon Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 277-308.

41. The work is no longer extant, but an outline of it is given in the *Shoku Nihongi*, XV (Tenpyō 16:10:2).

42. *Ibid.*, XV (Tenpyō 15:1:13): "The age of counterfeit dharma is revived . . ."; XXIII (Tenpyō hōji 4:7:22) "Now the age of counterfeit dharma is coming to the end . . ."

43. Inoue Kairu, *Nihon kodai*, 205-208.

44. Major persecutions took place in 444-446 (in the reign of Emperor Wu of Northern Wei), and 574 (Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou), while minor ones occurred in 626 and 713. See Nomura Yōshō, *Shūbu hōnan no kenkyū*.

45. In China, theory A was adopted by Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334-416), Tao-ch'ō 道綽 (526-645), K'uei-chi 窺基 (632-682), and others. Theory C was adopted by Tao-hsüan 道宣 (596-667). See Takao Giken, *Chūgoku Bukkyō shiron*, 54-96.

46. *Mahāvairocanaśāsanipāṭasūtra* (*Taishō*, XIII, No. 397), 1-408.



By conferring the merits obtained in writing this work on all beings who are going astray, I pray to be born in the western land of bliss with them all [III.Postscript].

He believed that man would be saved if he repented of his past and aspired to Buddhahood, and he compiled the *Nihon ryōiki* to accumulate merits in the hope that he and his fellowmen might be saved from evil and misfortune.<sup>50</sup> In another passage he says:

Kyōkai, however, has not studied the *yin-yang tao* 陰陽道 of Huang Ti 黃帝, nor understood the profound truth of the Tendai Sage 天台智者, and he is stricken with disaster without knowing how to evade it, worrying and grieving without looking for the way to do away with disaster [III.38].

For Kyōkai, the sophisticated Buddhist doctrines of the Tendai Sage,<sup>51</sup> as well as the Chinese cosmological theories<sup>52</sup> lead to the secret of the cosmic law. He was convinced that the good way of life could be taught to all. In this respect he differed from those monks who became prominent toward the end of the Heian period, for they professed faith in the pure land and affirmed that man is too sinful to attain any merits on his own.

We can conclude, tentatively, that the *Nihon ryōiki*, including the "Unknown Passage," is the work of Kyōkai and that it was compiled over many years but was left incompletely edited. Kyōkai seems to have accepted Buddhist eschatological ideas and the notion of the decadent age, but these concepts did not change his basic world view. The inconsistencies that resulted do not prevent us from concluding that Kyōkai is responsible for the *Nihon ryōiki*, for he seems to have been an ordinary monk, little interested in doctrinal studies and the writing of a systematic work. His aim, rather, was to guide people to salvation by transferring the merit gained in the compilation of a collection of Buddhist legends. He intended to show how dharma was at work in the history of the whole Japanese people, whether or not they knew of the teachings of Śākyamuni, and to demonstrate that dharma is neither Indian nor Chinese, but universal.

50. The Buddhist idea of karma cannot be understood apart from the belief that Śākyamuni attained enlightenment after long, unflinching efforts, through a series of many births, toward the maturing of good stock (Skt. *kuśalamūla* 善根) and accumulation of merits (Skt. *puṇyaskandha* 功德).

51. Refers to Chih-i 智顗 (538-597), founder of the T'ien t'ai School in China, who formulated the T'ien t'ai doctrines. Cf. Leon Hurvitz, "Chih-i," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, XII (1962), 1-372.

52. A cosmology which presupposes that all phenomena result from the interplay of male and female principles; it was customarily regarded as the creation of the mythical Huang Ti 黃帝 (traditional dates 2998-2598 B.C.), often called the Yellow Emperor, who was believed to be the founder of the Chinese Empire and to symbolize the ancient golden rule. Cf. Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, Chap. 2. See III.38, n. 50.

### c. Yakushi-ji and the Six Nara Schools

Kyōkai compiled the *Nihon ryōiki* in the precincts of Yakushi-ji, which was originally built in the central part of the capital known as Fujiwara-kyō 藤原京.<sup>53</sup> Yakushi-ji was one of the four great temples in the capital, together with Asuka-no-tera 飛鳥寺 (Hōkō-ji 法興寺), Ōtsukasa-no-ōtera 大官大寺 (Takechi-no-ōtera 高市大寺), and Kawara-no-tera 川原寺 (Gufuku-ji 弘福寺). In 680 Emperor Tenmu made a vow to build Yakushi-ji as a meritorious act of petition for the recovery of his consort's health,<sup>54</sup> but he died before making much progress. His consort, who succeeded him as Empress Jitō, continued the construction, and it was almost completed by 698, during the reign of Emperor Monmu, her grandson.<sup>55</sup> After the transfer of the capital to Nara, Yakushi-ji was removed to its present site in 718, the original temple becoming known as Moto-yakushi-ji.

During the first stage of Buddhism in Japan, most temples were built by influential families; after the acceptance of Buddhism at court, emperors built temples which functioned both as private temples for the imperial family and as official temples for the state cult. In the capital of Fujiwara the four great temples were designated as state temples by Emperor Tenmu and given financial support.<sup>56</sup> The capital of Nara was built on a larger scale, with state temples being added one after another.<sup>57</sup> The erection of Tōdai-ji with its colossal Buddha statue marks the high point of the Nara period (710-774). It was built as the headquarters for all provincial temples, and, at the dedication ceremony of the Great Lochana Buddha,<sup>58</sup> ex-Emperor Shōmu declared himself to be the "slave of the Three Treasures."<sup>59</sup>

53. The original temple was located at present Kidono-machi, Kashihara-shi, Nara-ken 奈良縣橿原市木殿町. Fujiwara-kyō was the first permanent capital situated in the Yamato plain, although it was short-lived (694-710).

54. *Nihon shoki*, XXIX (Tenmu 9:11:12): "The empress was unwell. Having made a vow on her behalf, the emperor began the construction of Yakushi-ji and made one hundred persons enter the priesthood. In consequence of this she recovered." See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 348.

55. *Shoku Nihongi*, I (Monmu 2:10:4): "The construction of Yakushi-ji being nearly completed, an imperial command was given to the monks to occupy their quarters." See J. R. Snellen, "Shoku Nihongi," *TASJ*, Second Series, XI (December 1934), 176.

56. *Nihon shoki*, XXXIX (Tenmu 9:4). See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 356.

57. Possible dates for the transfer and erection of new temples are:

710 Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 (former Yamashina-no-tera 山階寺) and Daian-ji 大安寺 (former Ōtsukasa-no-ōtera) transferred.

718 Yakushi-ji and Gangō-ji (former Asuka-no-tera) transferred.

749 Tōdai-ji 東大寺 erected.

759 Tōshōdai-ji 唐招提寺 erected.

765 Saidai-ji 西大寺 erected.

58. Vairocana Buddha of the *Kegon-gyō* 華嚴經 (*Avatamsakasūtra*) and *Boninō-kyō* 梵網經 (*Brahmajālasūtra*), a cosmic Buddha symbolizing the oneness of the universe.

59. *Shoku Nihongi*, XVII (Tenpyō shōhō 1:4:1): "This is the word of the sovereign who is the slave (*yakko* 奴, same as *nui*) of the Three Treasures."



One indication of the wide acceptance of Buddhism among the common people is the fact that more than thirty stories out of a hundred and sixteen in the *Nihon ryōiki* originated in his reign. By that time about four hundred temples had been built throughout the country, almost ten thousand scriptures had been brought from the continent and copied, and about fifteen hundred monks and nuns had been officially recognized.<sup>60</sup>

Buddhism was transmitted to Japan mainly from Korea, and Korean monks and immigrants played a significant role in its acceptance.<sup>61</sup> During the century following its introduction, the need for direct contact with China was felt, and many student monks were sent to China to pursue the study of Buddhism there. One of their missions was to bring back as many scriptures as possible to build up Buddhist libraries in Japan. Soon after Buddhist scriptures were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese, they found their way to Japan, stimulating the rise and development of Buddhist study groups, which eventually became Buddhist schools during the Nara period.

The first reference to Buddhist schools is found in a decree issued in 718 by the chancellor (*daijōkan* 太政官), which mentions that "the studies of the five schools and the teachings of the Three Baskets (Skt. *tripitaka*) differ in theory and argument. . . ."<sup>62</sup> The Six Nara Schools<sup>63</sup> came into existence between 747 and 751, and they were well represented at Tōdai-ji; there each had its own facilities including a library, an altar, and an office, and each had its own officials who administered funds.<sup>64</sup> The situation seems to have been different at older temples, but unfortunately their history is so poorly documented that it has been little studied by scholars. Only recently has the existence of the pre-Nara tradition transmitted in those temples been discussed and assessed.

The *Nihon ryōiki* contains some passages relevant to this problem. There are three stories about the funds of the Sutara-shū 修多羅宗(衆), a school or seminar which existed at Daian-ji from the late Nara

period to the early Heian period (II.24, 28; III.3).<sup>65</sup> It seems that each seminar had its officials: senior dean (*daigakutō* 大學頭), junior dean (*shōgakutō* 小學頭), and provost (*ina* 維那). In addition to the Sutara School, the Ritsu, Sanron, Betsu-sanron, and Shōron 攝論 Schools were represented at Daian-ji.<sup>66</sup> At Gangō-ji there were three seminars: Sanron, Jōjitsu, and Shōron, the history of which can be traced back to Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614-669)<sup>67</sup> who donated building funds.<sup>68</sup> At Hōryū-ji 法隆寺 there were four seminars: Sanron, Betsu-sanron, Hossō, and Ritsu.<sup>69</sup> No record exists concerning Yakushi-ji.

It is evident from this material that at large temples there were several distinct seminars, called *shū*,<sup>70</sup> devoted to the study of particular scriptures. The names of at least nine such seminars which once existed in several temples are known to us,<sup>71</sup> and the great state temples, where various seminars were represented, thus served as institutes for Buddhist studies. These seminars, each of which centered about the study of a scripture, existed in the eighth century. They were gradually reorganized and eventually institutionalized as six officially recognized schools. The *Nihon ryōiki* employs the phrase, "deans of the Six Schools" (II.28), and we may conclude that the idea of the Six Nara Schools had become widespread by the beginning of the Heian period, which coincided with Kyōkai's lifetime. This was

65. Tamura, *Asuka Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 113-133. As there had been no such school in either China or Korea and no document reveals its nature in Japanese history, there is ample room for arguments and theories as to its identity. Tamura asserts that it is a school established by Dōji for the study of the *Dai hannya-kyō* 大般若經, while others identify it with one of the Six Nara Schools. Inoue Mitsusada ("Nanto rokushū," 11-12) equates it with Jōjitsu; Ishida Mosaku, with Hossō (*Shakyō yori mitaru Narachō Byōkyō no kenkyū*, 67).

66. "Daian-ji garan engi narabini ruki shizaichō," *Nara ibun*, ed. by Takeuchi, I, 299. Two Sanron Schools were found at Hōryū-ji and Kōfuku-ji as well as Daian-ji. According to Inoue, one is the school of Chi-tsang 吉藏 (549-623), and the other is that of the followers of Bhāvaviveka (or Bhavya) 清辯 (490-560/570), whose works were transmitted to China by Hsüan-tsang ("Nanto rokushū," 8-10). Shōron is a shortened title of Asanga's *Mahāyānapariśaṃgraha*, *Shōdaijōron* 攝大乘論, a major text for the Yuishiki School till the seventh century; hence the name of a school devoted to its study (*Taishō*, XXXI, No. 1592, 97-112b; No. 1593, 112b-132c; No. 1594, 132c-152a).

67. Also known as Nakatomi no Kamako no muraji 中臣鎌子連 who helped Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子 overthrow the Soga family and carry out the Taika Reform.

68. "Gangōji garan engi," *Nara ibun*, I, 390; "Kaden," *ibid.*, II, 880.

69. "Hōryū-ji garan engi narabini ruki shizaichō," *ibid.*, I, 347. The founding of Hōryū-ji is ascribed to Prince Shōtoku who lived close to its precincts at Ikaruga (I.5); the original temple building was destroyed by fire in 670 (*Nihon shoki*, XXVII, Tenchi 9:4:30). See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 293; also, J. H. Kamstra, *Encounter or Syncretism*, 312-315.

70. As to the use of two characters 衆 and 宗 for *shū*, Ishida thinks that the former character stands for seminar groups; the latter, for organizations made up of the seminars devoted to the study of the same scriptures at several temples. The two are structurally different (*Nara jidai*, 105). Inoue, however, says that the former character is not found after 747 and that the latter character replaces it in later documents. Considering other factors as well, he concludes that the latter means an officially recognized school of Buddhism ("Nanto rokushū," 3, 11).

71. Inoue, "Nanto rokushū," 13.

60. Ishida Mosaku, *Nara jidai bunka zakkō*, 2.

61. The *Nihon ryōiki* gives records of Korean monks such as Kanroku 勸勒 (I.5), Ensei 圓勢 (I.4), Gigaku 義聖 (I.14), Ta(r)ajō 多(羅)常 (I.26), and of monks of immigrant families such as Soga 蘇我 and Kuratsukuri 鞍作 (I.5). The *Shinsen shōjiroku* 新撰姓氏錄 (Newly Selected Records of Family Names and Titles) compiled in 814-815 gives the proportion of immigrant families as 326 to 1,059, or about 30 percent of the registered families.

62. *Shoku Nihongi*, VIII (Yōrō 2:10:10).

63. They are Kusha 俱舍, Sanron 三論, Jōjitsu 成實, Hossō 法相, Ritsu 律, and Kegon 華嚴. Cf. J. Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*.

64. See Ishida, *Nara jidai*, 136-149; Inoue Mitsusada, "Nanto rokushū no seiritsu," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 156 (1961), 2-14.



brought about partly by the natural development of Buddhist studies, and partly by the government's eagerness to standardize and promote such studies.

d. State Control of the Samgha and Popular Buddhist Movements

As soon as Buddhism spread beyond India, where the samgha enjoyed an authority independent of the state, the problem of the relationship between samgha and state was raised. In China a central supervisory system was instituted during the fourth century, but not much is known about it. Generally speaking, state control was stronger in the north than in the south. Under the northern dynasties samgha officials independently administered the affairs of its members, but secular officials were appointed to oversee samgha properties. Under the southern dynasties, however, no secular officials were appointed as samgha officials.<sup>72</sup> The Sui dynasty (581–618), which united northern and southern China, followed the legal system of the northern dynasties, and secular officials were appointed to oversee samgha officials. The T'ang dynasty (618–907) adopted a similar system, and the autonomy of the samgha was weakened.

In Japan the relationship between samgha and state was regulated by the institution of the *Sōgō-sei* 僧綱制, a supervisory system for monks and nuns, and its legal code laid down in the *Sōni-ryō* 僧尼令, a collection of ordinances concerning monks and nuns. The former was established in 624, when Empress Suiko made appointments of *sōjō* 僧正 (Ch. *seng-cheng*), *sōzu* 僧都 (Ch. *seng-tu*), and *hōzu* or *hōtō* 法頭 for the control of monks and nuns.<sup>73</sup> These titles reflect the influence of the southern Chinese tradition. The *sōgō*, samgha supervisors, were charged with the discipline and punishment of monks and nuns. A story in the *Nihon ryōiki* tells how a Korean monk, Kanroku (Kwal-leuk), stressing the importance of the autonomy of the samgha, ap-

72. See Yamazaki Hiroshi, *Shīna chūsei Bukkyō no tenkai*, Part II. In Liu Sung (420–479) and Ch'i (479–502) times, the chief executive was called *seng-chu* 僧主; under the Liang (502–557) and Ch'en (557–589), he was called *seng-cheng* 僧正. Assistant executives were termed *seng-tu* 僧都 or *wei-no* 維那. Inoue Mitsusada believes that the Japanese system was more influenced by the southern tradition than by the northern tradition or the later Sui and T'ang systems. See his *Nihon kodai kokka no kenkyū*, 324–327.

73. According to the *Nihon shoki*, XXII (Suiko 32:4:3): "There was a Buddhist monk who took an axe and struck his grandfather with it. Having heard of this, the empress summoned ministers and gave a command, saying: 'The man who has renounced the mundane world should be devoted to the Three Treasures, and cherish devoutly the Buddhist precepts. How can he recklessly cause a crime? We have heard that a monk struck his grandfather. Therefore, let all the monks and nuns of temples be assembled and an investigation made. Let severe punishment be inflicted on any who are convicted of offences.'" See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 152–153.

pealed to the empress to prevent secular officials from punishing monks and nuns and to leave this responsibility to samgha officials (I.5). Eventually he was appointed *sōjō* with two laymen for *sōzu* and *hōzu*.<sup>74</sup> Of the three samgha officials, *sōjō* and *sōzu* had precedents in China and Korea, even though a layman had never been appointed *sōzu* in China. The office of *hōzu*, a secretary in charge of samgha properties, was created in Japan. As the first three appointees were all related to the Soga family, the leadership seems at first to have been in their hands.

In 645, when the Soga family perished, the reformed government established fundamental policies and appointed ten eminent monks as leaders of the samgha.<sup>75</sup> These appointments were politically motivated to smooth over the transition of leadership from the Sogas to the court, and, after this objective was fulfilled, no further appointments of this kind were made.<sup>76</sup> The new *Sōgō* system was firmly established in the reign of Emperor Tenmu by replacing *hōzu* with *risshi* 律師, preceptors, and by excluding lay officials from the *Sōgō* system.<sup>77</sup> The function of *hōzu* was taken over by the bureau for the administration of alien relations and registry of monks and nuns, Genbaryō 玄蕃寮, which was probably established by Empress Jitō about 690.<sup>78</sup> Theoretically, the samgha officials were subordinate to the Genbaryō, but the autonomy of the samgha was respected in the Kinai region, while in the rest of the country a provincial magistrate (國司) and a provincial preceptor (國師) were in charge of samgha

74. *Ibid.*, XXII (Suiko 32:4:17): "Monk Kanroku was appointed *sōjō*, and Kuratsukuri no Tokosaka 鞍作德積 was made *sōzu*. On the same day Azumi no muraji 阿曇連 was made *hōzu*." See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 153.

75. *Ibid.*, XXV (Taika 1:8:8).

76. The Chinese precedent for this system occurred during the T'ang dynasty when ten virtuous monks were appointed to control the samgha in 619. This autonomous system did not last long, however, and secular officials took office again. See Yamazaki, *Shīna chūsei*, 602–607.

77. *Nihon shoki*, XXIX (Tenmu 2:12:27).

78. Tamura, *Asuka Bukkyōshi*, 90. The following is adapted from his table on p. 94 to show the chronological development of the *Sōgō* system. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of appointees, and the offices in italics were filled by laymen.

Year	Reign	Appointive offices in the <i>Sōgō</i> system			
624	Suiko 32	<i>sōjō</i> (1)	<i>sōzu</i> (1)	<i>hōzu</i> (1)	
645	Taika 1	jusshi (10)		<i>hōzu</i> (3)	
673	Tenmu 2	<i>sōjō</i> (1)	dai- <i>sōzu</i> (1) shō- <i>sōzu</i> (1)	<i>hōzu</i> (1)	sakan (4)
683	Tenmu 12	<i>sōjō</i> (1)	dai- <i>sōzu</i> (1) shō- <i>sōzu</i> (1)	risshi (1)	sakan (4)

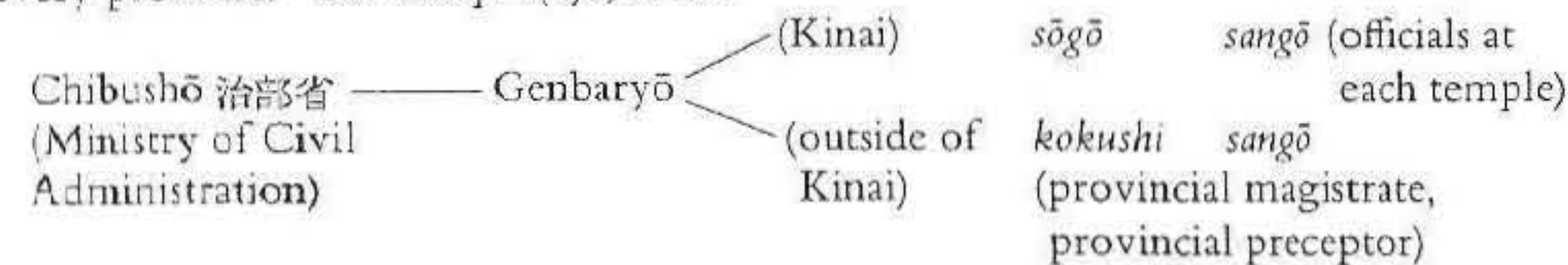


affairs.<sup>79</sup> This system must have been influenced by the T'ang's bureaucratic rule of the samgha, but the appointment of a provincial preceptor, a new position created in Japan, revealed that the samgha maintained some autonomy in Japan in spite of apparent state control.

The *Sōni-ryō*, a compilation of ordinances concerning monks and nuns, was aimed at more direct control over the samgha, although in reality it represented a compromise with the already established tradition of the *Sōgō* system. The *Sōni-ryō* is contained in the earliest extant legislative code, the *Yōrō-ryō* 養老令, which was promulgated in 757,<sup>80</sup> although there are a few earlier codes such as the *Ōmi-ryō* 近江令 (668?), *Kiyomigahara-ryō* 淨御原令 (689), and *Taihō-ritsuryō* 大寶律令 (702). It is probable that the T'ang laws influenced the *Sōni-ryō*, but the T'ang codes do not include a specific chapter of ordinances concerning monks and nuns. There are, however, some temporary and subsidiary laws called *Tao-seng ko* 道僧格, or laws concerning Taoist and Buddhist monks.<sup>81</sup> The Japanese government, after careful study, adopted the T'ang laws after making certain modifications necessary to meet political and social conditions at that time.<sup>82</sup> The *Sōni-ryō* consists of administrative, substantive, qualifying, and penal administrative laws. It is assumed that the *Sōni-ryō* was an independent set of laws that originated in the autonomous rules of the samgha and was later incorporated into the code.<sup>83</sup> The severest punishment prescribed for monks and nuns was reversion to lay status. For instance, article 14 of the *Sōni-ryō* says:

For the office of the *Sōgō* it is essential to select a man of virtuous conduct, who can guide the people wisely. It is necessary that he be respected by both clergy and laity, and be competent in management of samgha affairs. Those who wish to recommend someone shall notify the authorities with collected signatures. . . .

79. *Shoku Nihongi*, II (Taihō 2:2:20): "A provincial preceptor was appointed and assigned to every province." See Chap. I(1)a, n. 21.



80. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 25.

81. Cf. Futaba Kenkō, *Kodai Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, Part II, Chap. 2.

82. Inoue Kaoru asserts that the *Sōni-ryō* was first compiled in the *Taihō-ritsuryō*, basing his assertion on the passage in the *Shoku Nihongi*, II (Taihō 1:6:1): "Michi no kimi Ofutona 道君首名 was made to expound the *Sōni-ryō* to the congregation of monks at Daian-ji." See his *Nihon kodai*, 238. On the other hand, Futaba believes it originated in Emperor Tenmu's reign. See his *Kodai Bukkyō*, 137. Emperor Tenmu achieved the centralization of the state by establishing many new systems to consolidate it. The *Sōni-ryō* is regarded by Futaba as one of these measures.

83. Nanba Toshinari, "Sōni-ryō no kōsei to seiritsu ni tsuite," *Bukkyō shigaku*, XIII (No. 2, 1967), 104-120.

The samgha supervisors in the central office who managed all monastic establishments with the help of officials at each temple<sup>84</sup> were recommended by the monks and appointed by the chancellor.

Although this system of recommendation and election sounds quite democratic, throughout the Nara period the ordination of monks and nuns was in the hands of the Genbaryō, a bureau of the central government. When a free citizen wanted to renounce lay status, he had to obtain a permit from that bureau in order to exempt himself from taxation and the rule of local authorities. For those taxed heavily, entering the priesthood brought a considerable degree of relief. Accordingly, the government carefully checked the activities of any itinerant peasants in an effort to detect laymen pretending to be monks and to return them to their original status (III.14). Those who attempted to obtain immunities by fraudulent means or to deceive the public by wearing clerical robes and begging with a bowl were punished (Article 22). Those who had once pretended to be monks and nuns could never be ordained, even if they had led a disciplined life (Article 24). State control of ordination through the *Sōgō* system was not challenged until the arrival of Ganjin 鑑真 (688-763), an eminent Chinese monk who was invited to Japan to establish the orthodox platform for full ordination. A later protest was lodged by Saichō, the founder of the Tendai School and the Mahayana platform for ordination.<sup>85</sup>

To become a monk, a man customarily passed through the following stages: he renounced lay life at an early age to serve as an acolyte to a monk; in his teens he underwent ordination, *tokudo* 得度, and became a novice. Before this could be done, however, a recommendation for ordination had to be sent to the Genbaryō, which examined the applicant's personal character and his knowledge of essential requirements.<sup>86</sup> Once ordained, novice monks were issued permits from the bureau, and they were expected to observe the precepts.<sup>87</sup>

84. *Sangō* 三綱 consists of *jōza* 上座 (Skt. *sthāvira*), president, *tera-ju/-nushi* 寺主 (Skt. *vihārasvāmin*), director, and (*tsu*) *ina* (都維那 (Skt. *karmadāna*), provost. In smaller temples there was one official for each office, while in larger ones there were two directors and provosts, a junior one and a senior one. See Ishida, *Nara jidai*, 101-102.

85. See Satō Tetsuei, "Dengyō Daishi no Daijō sōdan," in *Bukkyō kyōdan no kenkyū*, ed. by Yoshimura Shūki, 351-396.

86. Horiike Shunpō, "Ubasoku kōshinge to shukke nyūshisho," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 114 (1957), 25-32.

87. The first five of the ten precepts were binding on all lay devotees, lay brothers and sisters; novice monks and nuns were required to keep all ten precepts. Many different versions of the precepts are found in Buddhist scriptures. According to the *Khuddakapāṭha*, II, they are: no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, no drinking, no eating at wrong hours, no worldly amusements, no ornaments, no sleeping in a large bed, and no possession of gold and jewels. Mahayana scriptures such as the *Kegon-gyō* and *Bonmō-kyō* give the ten precepts for a bodhisattva. See Tsuchihashi Shūkō, "Jukai girei no henshen," *Bukkyō kyōdan no kenkyū*, 205-282.



After a few years of disciplined life, novices received the full list of some two hundred and fifty precepts, *jukai* 受戒, and became full-fledged monks. In the Buddhist tradition three masters and seven witnesses, all qualified monks, had to be present to give the complete set of precepts to a novice and to consecrate him as a monk. Before the arrival of Ganjin, there were so few monks qualified to perform this rite that it was practically unknown. However, the texts of the Hinayana precepts continued to be studied by some monks.<sup>88</sup> Ganjin was invited by Emperor Shōmu to initiate the traditional rite of giving the complete precepts to Japanese monks. For example, Saichō, who followed the standard procedure, left home to serve a provincial preceptor at the age of twelve. After two years he was examined for ordination as a novice, and he received the complete precepts to become a monk at the age of nineteen, a little earlier than the standard age of twenty.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, Kyōkai was ordained in middle age, after marrying and begetting a child. Those who renounced the householder's life in middle age were, after a few years of discipline, ordained as lay brothers or sisters. For example, Kūkai, who first intended to become a government official and who went to the university<sup>90</sup> in order to study the Chinese classics, changed his course as the result of an encounter with a Buddhist monk. After following ascetic practices in the mountains as a lay brother,<sup>91</sup> he renounced lay status at the age of twenty-four and was ordained when he was thirty-one, before sailing for China.

The official ordination system was aimed not only at controlling the number of monks but also at setting minimum standards for their doctrinal education. When Buddhism was first introduced, it was organized largely as a system of religious rites for the benefit of influential families. Many persons were ordained so that their masters might obtain merit and recover from illness. By the early eighth century, however, a minimal standard of learning was required for ordination. A decree issued in 734 states that no one was to be ordained

without first memorizing a chapter of the *Hoke-kyō* 法華經<sup>92</sup> or the *Saishō-kyō* 最勝王經,<sup>93</sup> learning to perform Buddhist rites, and living under monastic discipline for at least three years.<sup>94</sup> According to the record of the recommendations for ordination during the period from 732 to 745, the number of years spent under discipline ranged from four to fifteen, and the age of those who had undergone discipline, from thirteen to forty-eight.<sup>95</sup> After that period the names of scriptures memorized and the number of years of discipline were not recorded, but evidence of participation in the construction of a temple, particularly Tōdai-ji, or the fact of being related to an official or a monk was noted. There was a tendency toward lowering the age and qualifications of monks as their numbers increased.<sup>96</sup>

Monks and nuns were expected to maintain disciplined lives of study, instruction, and the performance of rites in the temples, except when they were allowed to go for meditation in the mountains (Articles 5, 13). They were not permitted to own land, buildings, or other forms of wealth, nor could they buy and sell for profit or lend at interest (Article 18). They could not set up unauthorized establishments and preach to congregations, nor falsely expound on the karmic retribution of good and evil (Article 5). They were not permitted to practice fortune-telling or to attempt curing illness by exorcism or magic. However, healing by the recitation of Buddhist formulas<sup>97</sup> was practiced (Article 2).

These articles of the *Sōni-ryō* were often ignored, even by officially ordained monks in state temples. In spite of the government ban there were many self-ordained monks, and descriptions of them can be found in the *Nihon ryōiki* (I.19, 27; III.10, 15, 17, 33). Retreat to the mountains was such a popular practice among ascetics that eventually, in 770, the prohibition against living in the mountains was relaxed.<sup>98</sup> Both Saichō and Kūkai emphasized withdrawal to the mountains, aiming at a meditative and rigorously disciplined life. The sangha and monks are well known for their economic activities in the cultiva-

88. Ishida Mizumaro, *Ganjin*, 25-33; *Nihon Bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*, 25-31.

89. Sonoda Kōyū, "Saichō to Kūkai," *Nihon Bukkyō shisō no tenkai*, ed. by Ienaga Saburō, 33-57.

90. *Daigaku* 大學, a state college for the study of the Chinese classics, established to train the sons of men of the fifth rank or higher for official careers. See *Ryō no gige*, "Gaku-ryō," Articles 2, 3, etc.

91. *Ubasoku* 優婆塞, transliterated from Skt. *upāsaka*; a layman who professes faith in the Three Treasures and keeps the five precepts. In Mahayana Buddhism lay brothers form one group in the sangha.

92. *Myōhō-enge-kyō* 妙法蓮華經 (*Taishō*, IX, No. 262, 1-62c; No. 263, 63a-134b; No. 264, 134b-196a). H. Kern, trans., *Saddharmapundarika or the Lotus of the True Law* (SBE, XXI); Bunnō Katō, trans., *Myōhō-enge-kyō: The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law*.

93. *Kōkōmyō saishō-kyō* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsottamarājāsūtra*), (*Taishō*, XVI, No. 665, 403-456.)

94. *Ruijū sandai-kyaku*, II (*Tenpyō* 6:11:20).

95. "Chishiki ubasoku tō kōshinbun," *Nara ibun*, ed. by Takeuchi, II, 508-531.

96. *Shoku Nihongi*, XIV (*Tenpyō* 13:10:16), for an example of a mass ordination of 750 lay brothers.

97. *Ju* 咒 (incantation, spell, oath), though it originated in pre-Buddhist China, denotes Mantrayana dharani. See Chap. I(1)b, n. 47.

98. *Shoku Nihongi*, XXXI (*Hōki* 1:10:28).



tion of land (III.30), money lending (II.24; III.3, 4), and brewing (II.32), thus violating the ban (Article 18). Originally money lending had been instituted at Chinese monasteries as a social welfare measure, but it soon turned into a profit-making business conducted by unscrupulous monks.<sup>99</sup> One story in the *Nihon ryōiki* reveals a popular belief that one could escape the messenger of death by being engaged in business with a loan from the temple fund (II.24).

Although Buddhism in the Nara period served the state and was often referred to as "Buddhism for the welfare of the nation," the concept "nation" did not exclude the common people. The *Nihon ryōiki*, as stated above, has been considered one of the earliest sources for popular Buddhism in Japan, and it has been quoted to illustrate that Buddhism was popularly accepted. However, the distance that separated state Buddhism from popular Buddhism should not be unduly exaggerated. A helpful illustration of the situation that existed is seen in the case of Gyōgi 行基 (668–749), the person most venerated by the author of the *Nihon ryōiki*. At the age of fifteen, he renounced the world.<sup>100</sup> In spite of being condemned by the court because of activities outlawed by the *Sōni-ryō*, he continued preaching.<sup>101</sup> Emperor Shōmu sought his cooperation in building the statue of the Lochana Buddha at Tōdai-ji in 741 and appointed him great chief executive in 745.<sup>102</sup> According to tradition, he lived for some time in Yakushi-ji, a state temple.<sup>103</sup> He traveled and preached (II.2, 7, 8, 12, 29, 30), and directed the construction of bridges and canals and the establishment of ferries (II.30). Wherever he went, thousands of followers gathered to hear him. Lay brothers over sixty-one and lay sisters over fifty-five who followed him were allowed to enter the priesthood in 731,<sup>104</sup> and these lay devotees played an intermediary role between the clergy and the common people.

Gyōgi was not the first monk to carry out such projects on behalf of society. Dōshō, the founder of the Hossō School in Japan and Gyōgi's master, had also traveled, preached, and built bridges and ferries while on journeys in later years (I.22). Evidently such activities worked against the government's intention to confine monks to the

99. Michihata Ryōshū, *Tōdai Bukkyōshi no kenkyū*, 514–545.

100. Inoue Kaoru, *Gyōki*, 7.

101. *Shoku Nihongi*, VII (Yōrō 1:4:23): "These days the streets are filled with an ordinary monk named Gyōgi and his followers, who preach the karmic retribution of good and evil irresponsibly and mislead people by organizing groups and burning fingers and elbows as they abuse the Buddha's teaching to ask for donations."

102. *Ibid.*, XVI (Tenpyō 17:1:21). See II, 7, n. 18.

103. *Ibid.*, XVII (Tenpyō shōhō 1:2:2).

104. *Ibid.*, XI (Tenpyō 3:8:7).

temple precincts (*Sōni-ryō*, Articles 5, 13), but Dōshō was greatly respected by Emperor Monmu.<sup>105</sup> Although Gyōgi was condemned by the court, it is clear that he was neither exiled nor persecuted, for he actively organized devotees and established many private temples and retreat halls for nearly forty years. Finally Emperor Shōmu compromised by sanctioning his leadership in the popular Buddhist movements, while asking for his help.

The *Sōni-ryō* aims at having Buddhist monks serve the state, thus preventing them from gaining leadership among the common people. There were reasons why Buddhism could not be confined to the monastic establishments, however. First, there were a number of immigrants and their descendants who had participated in the Buddhist tradition even before it was officially introduced from the continent. Eminent monks such as Gyōgi, Dōji, Dōshō, and Saichō were descendants of immigrants. Secondly, the imperial family and many influential families such as the Sogas gradually accepted Buddhism and built family temples, *uji-dera* 氏寺 (I.5, 7, 17; III.23, 30, for example). The idea of "state temples" evolved in the reign of Emperor Tenmu as part of the third phase of the development of Buddhism in Japan.<sup>106</sup>

In the early stages the ruling class was mainly responsible for building temples, promoting Buddhist art and sculpture, copying scriptures, and carrying out regular or occasional Buddhist ceremonies. This practice, however, did not continue for long. The *Sōni-ryō* includes an article prohibiting the building of private establishments (Article 5), but, far from its being enforced, state officials and influential families were actually encouraged to build temples.<sup>107</sup> In addition to state and provincial temples, there were "licensed temples," *jōgaku-ji* 定額寺, which were built with private means but officially recognized and financially supported by the state.<sup>108</sup> The decree issued in 783,

105. *Ibid.*, I (Monmu 4:3:10): "On his return home from China he built and lived in a hall for meditation in the southeastern corner of the Gangō-ji precincts. Seekers from all quarters came to learn meditation under his guidance. In his later years he traveled widely, dug wells by the roadside, provided boats at each ferry and built bridges. Thus the Uji Bridge in Yamashiro is his construction. As the Venerable Dōshō had traveled for more than ten years, the emperor asked him to return, and he came back to live at the hall for meditation." For details of the relationship between Gyōgi and Dōshō, see Inoue Kaoru, *Gyōki*, 30–34.

106. Tamura, *Asuka Bukkyōshi*, 34–53. On the basis of his analysis of the period from the introduction of Buddhism to its establishment as state religion, he postulates a first stage covering the reigns of Kinmei, Bitatsu, Yōmei, and Sushun, when the court adopted a noncommittal policy, although Buddhism was accepted by some emperors privately; a second stage covering the reigns of Suiko, Jomei, Kōgyoku, Kōtoku, Saimei, and Tenchi, when the state control of the sangha was instituted and Buddhism was established at court; and a third stage coinciding with the reign of Tenmu, when Buddhism was established as a state religion.

107. *Ruijū kokushi*, 180 (Tenpyō 7:6:5); *Shoku Nihongi*, XVII (Tenpyō 19:11:7, 19:11:14).

108. *Shoku Nihongi*, XVII (Tenpyō shōhō 1:4:3, 1:7:13).



which stated that even in the smallest districts there were temples, stressed the need to limit their numbers.<sup>109</sup>

From the *Nihon ryōiki* we learn that there were many private temples whose buildings and statues were more modest than those of the state temples. They were often named after the village or hamlet where they stood, and were called *dō* 堂 rather than *tera* 寺. They were centers for the religious activities of the villagers, whereas mountain temples were for the retreat of disciplined monks. These village buildings were erected and maintained by villagers organized into *chishiki* 知識<sup>110</sup> by a monk or local official.<sup>111</sup> The *chishiki*, made up of lay devotees of considerable education and means, not only built private temples, made images, and copied scriptures, but they also sponsored monks to expound Buddhist teachings. It was through their activities that the common people came into contact with Buddhist teachings. In the case of the erection of an *uji-dera*, the *uji*<sup>112</sup> functioned as a *chishiki* and the temple symbolized the organizational unity of that *uji*.

The *Nihon ryōiki* records the story of the Ōtomo 大伴 family in Shinano 信濃 province. They built an *uji*-temple, and, after it was completed, an ordained member of the *uji* lived in the temple until he was killed by one of the patrons, a member of the same *uji*. We are told that the monk went to hell because he made private use of the temple property (III.23). This story suggests a decree issued in 716:

It is reported that in all provinces even if temples have been constructed, there are neither monks nor nuns in residence, no Buddhist rites are performed, and descendants of the donors take over the rice paddies of the temple to support their families. . . .<sup>113</sup>

According to the records of recommendations for ordination, many monks and lay devotees came from the families of local magistrates.

109. *Ibid.*, XXXVII (Enryaku 2:6:10).

110. A translation of Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*, a friend of virtue, good counsellor, or name of Śākyamuni; donation of fields, grains, money, labor for the Three Treasures; hence, an organization of devotees who share the same faith and participate in the same project.

111. References of *chishiki* in the *Nihon ryōiki*:

Vol.	Tale	Date or reign	Organizer	Project
I	35	?	nun	making image, saving life
II	31	Emperor Shōmu's reign	local official	building temple
	39	758 (Tenpyō hōji 2)	monk	building hall, making image
III	13	Empress Kōken's reign	local official	copying <i>Hoke-kyō</i>
	17	771 (Hōki 2)	monk	making image

112. Naoki Kōjirō, *Nihon kodai no shizoku to tenmō*, 101–135. *Uji* is defined as families grouped around a powerful family with a position in the hierarchical structure of the court.

113. *Shoku Nihongi*, VII (Reiki 2:5:15).

These magistrates, who had once been members of the ruling class in the provinces, were appointed to occupy lower ranks in the hierarchy after the centralization of the *ritsuryō* state.<sup>114</sup> They were made aware of the plight of the peasants, who suffered constantly from heavy taxation, famines, natural disasters, and civil war. Some of them turned to Buddhist teachings for some answer to their problems (II.2), while others utilized the temples as an institutional base for solidifying their power.<sup>115</sup> For example, the head of an *uji* built a temple by organizing his family group into a *chishiki*, and made one member of the same *uji* a monk in charge of the temple.

Several stages in the interaction of Buddhism with the native tradition can be traced in the *Nihon ryōiki*. The first instance is found in the story about an ancestor of a district magistrate of the seventh century. In gratitude for the protection given him in battle, he built a temple<sup>116</sup> to enshrine all the kami 神 of heaven and earth (I.7).<sup>117</sup> This early story omits any reference to the relationship between kami and Buddha. There follows a story illustrating the conflict between indigenous and imported traditions (I.28). E no Ozunu 役小角, legendary founder of the Shugendō 修驗道,<sup>118</sup> was slandered by Hitokotonushi no kami 一言主神<sup>119</sup> and exiled to Izu<sup>120</sup> by the court. This story is unique in the *Nihon ryōiki*, for it contains numerous Taoist phrases, in spite of the fact that E no Ozunu is pictured as a Buddhist lay ascetic and practitioner of Buddhist dharani.

In ancient Japan there were religious practices associated with mountains where kami lived and ascetics practiced austerities. When

114. In the eighth and ninth centuries Japan showed many characteristics of an imperial state due to the fact that the legal codes, *ritsuryō*, were patterned after those of T'ang China. See Sogabe Shizuo, *Ritsuryō o chūshin toshita Nichū kankeishi no kenkyū*.

115. *Shoku Nihongi*, XVII (Tenpyō 19:11:7). One way to secure the status of district magistrate was by building a temple.

116. *Garan* 伽藍 being the shortened transliteration of Skt. *saṃghārāma*, originally a monastery or convent, later meaning a temple which consists of buildings for religious rites and residential quarters.

117. *Kami* denotes the divine in the Shinto tradition and cannot be translated by any one English word. It refers to various deities of heaven and earth as well as their spirits, or to human beings, animals, trees, mountains, etc., which exhibit extraordinary powers; also it denotes the functional divinity affiliated with such natural phenomena as birth, growth, change. See Tsuda Sōkichi, "The Idea of Kami in Ancient Japanese Classics," *T'oung Pao*, LII (No. 4–5, 1966), 293–304. Hereafter *kami* will be treated as an English word.

118. *Shoku Nihongi*, I (Monmu 5:4:24); Snellen, 179. See H. Byron Earhart, "Shugendō, the Traditions of En no Gyōja, and Mikkyō Influences," in *Studies of Esoteric Buddhism and Tantrism*, 297–317. *E* is a family name which is often pronounced *En* in an elision with *no*; he is also known as *E* (or *En*) no gyōja (or ubasoku).

119. *Kojiki* 古事記, III, 132; *Nihon shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 4:2). During the reign of Emperor Yūryaku, Great Kami of Kazuraki (or Katsuragi) Hitokotonushi no kami [Lord of One Word], who dispelled evil and incurred good with a charm, revealed himself to the emperor on Mt. Kazuraki. See D. L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, 360–361; Aston, "Nihongi," I, 341–342.

120. 伊豆嶋; *Shoku Nihongi*, I (Monmu 5:5:24) 伊豆島; identified with present Izu Ōshima.



Buddhist ascetics went to the mountains, they prayed for the protection of the kami. Even scholar monks sent to China for Buddhist studies prayed to native kami for their safe journey. The prosperity of Buddhism was sought through the protection of kami. Many Hindu deities found their way into Buddhist scriptures as guardians of the dharma, and, in similar fashion, Japanese deities were considered protectors of dharma. Emperor Shōmu, a noted patron of Buddhism, paid homage to the Grand Shrine of Ise during a rebellion in 740,<sup>121</sup> and, in the following year, he sent copies of the *Saishō-kyō* and *Hoke-kyō*, monks, and horses to the deity Usa Hachiman 宇佐八幡, and built a pagoda attached to the shrine.<sup>122</sup> This is the beginning of the practice of building a *jingū-ji* 神宮寺, shrine-temple, which represents the institutional merger of a shrine and a temple. There developed at the same time the idea that kami were among the sentient beings and therefore in need of enlightenment. The story is told that in the Hōki era (770–780) the Great Kami of Taga 陀我 asked a monk to read the *Hoke-kyō* for him so that he might be liberated from *samsāra* (III.24). From the eighth century it became a common practice to read Buddhist scriptures before the altar at which a kami was enshrined.<sup>123</sup>

When Saichō challenged the traditional Buddhism at Nara, he insisted on establishing the Mahayana samgha, based on the Mahayana precepts expounded in the *Hoke-kyō* and independent of state control.<sup>124</sup> However, in declaring that the aim of the samgha was to protect the state, his teaching differed little from the traditional position which upheld the *Hoke-kyō*, *Saishō-kyō*, and *Ninnō hannya-kyō* 仁王般若經<sup>125</sup> as a trilogy of scriptures with power to promote the welfare of the state. However, his teaching was distinct in stressing that initiation into the Mahayana samgha—that is, transmission of the Mahayana precepts—should symbolize the immediate attainment of Buddhahood. Since Saichō was a prominent advocate of the new Buddhist teachings and a contemporary of Kyōkai, it is highly possible that Kyōkai knew Saichō.<sup>126</sup> Kyōkai was apparently interested in Saichō's fresh approach to Buddhist teachings. He was particularly

121. *Shoku Nihongi*, XIII (Tenpyō 12:9:11, 11:3). Nishida Nagao says that Gyōgi went to the Ise Shrine as an imperial messenger at that time. See his *Jinja no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 87–149.

122. *Shoku Nihongi*, XIV (Tenpyō 13:3:24).

123. Tamura, *Asuka Bukkyōshi*, 190–216. Hereafter *samsāra* will be treated as an English word.

124. Asai Endō, "Dengyō Daishi to Hokke shisō no renkan," *Hokke-kyō no shisō to bunka*, ed. by Sakamoto Yukio, 569–597.

125. *Ninnō hannya haramitsu-kyō* 仁王般若波羅蜜經 (*Taishō*, VIII, No. 245, 825a–834a).

126. In 801 and 802 Saichō invited several eminent monks of the great temples in Nara to his lectures on the *Hoke-kyō* and Tendai doctrines. In 815 he lectured on the *Hoke-kyō* at Daian-ji in Nara. This occasion marked the beginning of the debates between Saichō and Tokuichi 徳—(749–824) of the Hossō School in Nara which lasted for several years.

impressed with the bodhisattva ideal of working for the salvation of all and acquiring mystical knowledge as a means for attaining Buddhahood. Saichō's insistence on the Mahayana precepts and teachings for men in the decadent age met a ready response in an ordinary monk such as Kyōkai, who was keenly conscious of his limitations.

Although the Sōgō system and *Sōni-ryō* never fully realized their goals, they did achieve a fundamental aim in making Buddhist monks and nuns serve the state. Both suffering and happiness were understood as a communal experience to be shared within the family, village, province, and state. Such a tendency, which emphasizes group participation and identity is a recurrent theme in the Japanese tradition. On the level of popular practice, there was little differentiation in the roles of Buddha, bodhisattva, and kami in helping people to lead happier lives. In spite of the fact that their symbolic forms differed, they referred to faith and happiness here and now.

## (2) INFLUENCE OF EARLIER WRITINGS

### a. Doctrine of Karma and Samsara

Karma is a notion fundamental to the world view of Hindus and Buddhists alike. Karma, which etymologically means "action," "deed," is moral law, which is taken for granted by most Hindus as the basis on which the cosmos operates. The doctrine teaches that every human action takes place in a sequence of the moral law of cause and effect and each individual's existence is conditioned by the idea of samsara, transmigration. Man's life is neither limited to one lifetime nor to the human species. Man's existence is believed to transmigrate through numerous lives in different species, such as deities, animals, hungry ghosts, hell beings.<sup>127</sup>

This world view underlies Śākyamuni's teachings. The doctrine of interdependent causation<sup>128</sup> is interpreted by some Buddhists in close association with the idea of karma. Tradition says that Śākyamuni allowed a man who accepted the Buddhist interpretation of karma to join the samgha, for karma was probably regarded as a popular expression of the central doctrine of interdependent causation.<sup>129</sup> Bud-

127. The six modes and places of existence of animate beings are *naraka* (hell), *preta* (hungry ghost), *tiryāṇic* (animal), *asura* (furious spirit), *manuṣya* (man), and *deva* (heavenly being). The idea of the five modes and places of existence, excluding *asura* from the above six, was more popular in China and Japan. Although *asura* is never mentioned in the *Nihon ryōiki*, the terms "six destinies" (I. 21, 35) and "five destinies" (III. 38) are found in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

128. Skt. *pañcīyasaṃutpāda* (緣起), chain of causation, or dependent origination. See Edward J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, 58–70.

129. Mizuno Kōgen, "Gō-setsu ni tsuite," *IBK*, II (No. 2, 1954), 463–473.



dhists thoroughly adopted this pre-Buddhist notion of karma and samsara in the *Jātaka* literature, the tales of Buddha's numerous past lives, which appealed particularly to lay Buddhists.

When the Buddhist tradition entered Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan, the teaching of karma and samsara proved to be most novel and appealing to those who were taken by surprise by the subtle, metaphysical doctrines of Buddhism. This doctrine, although presented as a highly speculative cosmology, found some points of contact with the Chinese tradition because of the universality of the moral law of cause and effect. In China, where the idea of Heaven presiding over the universe was tenacious, however, the idea of fortune as a result of past deeds did not develop. Confucian scholars actively criticized this Buddhist doctrine on the basis of their concept of the "Mandate of Heaven" (*t'ien-ming* 天命),<sup>130</sup> which they regarded as determining man's fate. But the idea of the moral law of causation was not entirely absent among the Chinese, for in the Mandate of Heaven theory there was a common belief that good fortune comes to a family which does good deeds over a period of time, and misfortune to a family which does evil ones.<sup>131</sup> The difference lies in the fact that Buddhism combines the doctrines of karma and samsara and postulates a residuum that persists through many lives as a consequence of karma. The Chinese had difficulties with the doctrine of samsara in the beginning, but later interpreted it by using their concept of *shen* 神, soul, as an entity for transmigration and stressing its immortality, though this is somewhat contrary to the original Buddhist teachings.<sup>132</sup>

A clear understanding of karma was evidenced as early as the fourth century by Hsi Ch'ao 郝超 (336-377), who emphasized the function of the mind as subject to karmic retribution and stated that the effects of karma are borne by an individual.<sup>133</sup> His contention was further expounded by Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334-416) who wrote "San-pao lun" 三報論 (Treatise on the Three Ways of Karmic Retribution) in order to defend the doctrine of karma before those contemporaries who doubted the validity of the law of karmic retribution. He argues that people fail to recognize the effects of karma, because they confine

130. The theory of the "Mandate of Heaven" asserts that Heaven is accountable not only for human affairs but for natural phenomena; the cosmos is a self-contained, harmonious organism and it is the duty of rulers to maintain the state of equilibrium between man and nature.

131. Uchiyama Toshihiko, "Kandai no ôhō shisō," *Tokyo Shina gakuho*, No. 6 (1960), 19.

132. Walter Liebenthal, "The Immortality of the Soul in Chinese Thought," *Monumenta Nipponica*, VIII (1952), 327-396; Kajiyama Yūichi, "Eon no hōdōsetsu to shinfumetsuron," *Eon kenkyū—kenkyūhen*, ed. by Kimura Eiichi, 89-120.

133. Hsi Ch'ao, "Feng-fa yao," *Hung-ming chi* 弘明集, XIII (*Taishō*, LII, 86a-91b). See Erik Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, Appendix B to Chapter III, 165-176.

their consideration to their present existence. In order to convince them of the invisible function of karmic retribution, he introduces a new theory of *san-pao*, or three ways of karmic retribution.

The scripture says that karma is worked out in three ways: *hsien-pao* 現報, *sheng-pao* 生報, and *hou-pao* 後報. In the first, good and evil deeds originate and receive responses in the same lifetime. In the second, the effects of deeds will visit the person in the next lifetime. In the third, consequences will come in a second, third, hundredth, or thousandth lifetime. Nobody controls the function of karmic retribution, and only our mind is responsible for it.<sup>134</sup>

Hui-yüan may have taken this theory from the *Abhidharmasāra-hrdaya*<sup>135</sup> which was translated for him in 391/392 by Saṃghadeva.<sup>136</sup> His treatises popularized the theory of karmic retribution and contributed to its influence on later generations.

According to the *Kao-seng chuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks), Hui-yüan introduced an innovation into the routine of the Buddhist ceremonial meeting by opening it with stories on karmic causation.

Whenever there was a ceremonial meeting, he himself would ascend the high seat and personally take the lead in preaching, first elucidating the work of causation in the past, present, and future, and then discussing the significance of the particular occasions. Later generations continued this practice until it became a standard for all times.<sup>137</sup>

This is the beginning of *ch'ang-tao* 唱導, the practice of preaching, and the stories used as illustrations treated the theme of the law of karmic retribution. Tradition says that Kumārajīva (344-413) wrote a work called "Treatises on the Past, Present, and Future" (通三世論 in extant) and also emphasized the law of karmic retribution.<sup>138</sup> Chinese Buddhist writers are fond of asserting that a result follows a deed in the same way that a shadow follows a form or an echo follows a sound.<sup>139</sup>

134. Hui-yüan, "San-pao lun," *Hung-ming chi*, V (*Taishō*, LII, 34b); *Eon kenkyū—ibunhen*, ed. by Kimura, 70-71. See W. Liebenthal, "Shih Hui-yuan's Buddhism as Set Forth in his Writings," *JAOS*, LXX (1950), 243-259.

135. *A-pi-t'an hsin lun* 阿毘曇心論 (*Taishō*, XXVIII, No. 1550, 814b). 若業現法報次受於生報後報亦復然餘則說不定。

136. *Eon kenkyū—ibunhen*, ed. by Kimura, 314. See Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, 230.

137. Hui-chiao 慧皎, *Kao-seng chuan*, XIII (*Taishō*, L, 417c).

138. *Ibid.*, II (332b).

139. Hsi Ch'ao, "Feng-fa yao," (*Taishō*, LII, 87c). See Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest of China*, 169. Hui-yüan refers to this cliché in his "Ming-pao-ying lun," 明報應論 (*Eon kenkyū—ibunhen*, 76) and uses it himself (*ibid.*, 85). It is also found in an anonymous treatise, "Cheng-wu lun," 正誣論, *Hung-ming chi*, I (*Taishō*, LII, 8b), dated in the early fourth century and in Taoist scriptures.



They stressed that karmic retribution is based on the law of nature, and Kyōkai adopted their idea and cliché. It was about this time that several Buddhist scriptures expounding this doctrine were translated into Chinese.<sup>140</sup> People accepted a new cosmology in which the world was enlarged from the present to include the past and future, and at the same time from human beings to other modes of existence such as deities, animals, and ghosts. In contrast to the Confucianists, the Taoists did not attempt to refute the doctrine of karma and samsara. In fact, they used it to supplement their teachings, though it took several centuries for the Chinese indigenous idea of the other world to fully combine with the Buddhist cosmological conception.<sup>141</sup>

Hui-yüan's concept of karmic retribution is repeated in the preface of T'ang-lin's *Ming-pao chi*, a collection of Buddhist legends compiled between 650 and 655.

It is taught that there are three ways [of karmic retribution]. First, one receives in the present existence what one's good or evil deeds have caused. This is called *hsien-pao*. Second, what one's deeds have caused is not received in this existence, but determines the next life according to good and evil deeds. This is called *sheng-pao*. Third, if good or evil deeds in the past have not brought the results and one has gone through many lives and still created karma without any consequences, one will receive them in a second, fifth, or tenth lifetime. This is called *hou-pao*.<sup>142</sup>

T'ang-lin was a government official who received a Confucian education and espoused the Buddhist faith. He collected stories throughout China, presenting a Sinicized interpretation of the doctrine of karmic retribution. As the title and theme of his work, he chose *ming-pao*, "invisible function of karmic retribution," which is a general concept blending the three ways into one. In China, Buddhists tried to demonstrate the profundity of Buddhist doctrines by stressing the fact that they revealed future responses that were not even considered in Confucian teachings.

On the other hand, Kyōkai used the word *genpō* (*hsien-pao*), which in T'ang-lin's preface refers to consequences that are manifested in this life, as the main theme for the collection of Japanese Buddhist

140. *Kako genzai inga-kyō* 過去現在因果經 (*Taishō*, III, No. 189, 620c-653b), *Zaifuku hōō-kyō* 罪福報應經 (*Taishō*, XVII, No. 747, 562b-564c), *Funbetsu gōhō ryak-kyō* 分別業報略經 (*Taishō*, XVII, No. 723, 446b-450c), and others.

141. Akizuki Kan'ei, "Rikuchō Dōkyō ni okeru ōhōsetsu no hatten," *Hirosaki daigaku jimbunshakai*, No. 33 (1964), 26-60; reprinted in *Chūgoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō*, I (1964), Part One, 386-403.

142. T'ang-lin, *Ming-pao chi* (*Taishō*, LI, 788a).

legends. This may reflect his emphasis on present existence, even though he did not exclude stories dealing with the effects of past deeds upon a future life. He was uninterested in subtle arguments concerning the meaning of karma and samsara, or the question of whether there is something about man which is immortal. Rather, he compiled the *Nihon ryōiki* as an aid for monks in their preaching, should they wish to follow the fashion initiated by Hui-yüan in China, and as a guide for lay Buddhists. Kyōkai's primary concern seems to have been in the salvation of his fellow beings and himself, which he hoped would be accomplished as a result of the merit accumulated in the compiling of the collection. He understood karmic retribution as a universal principle and stated that its operation was also discernible in the Chinese classics and in the pre-Buddhist age in Japan (I. Preface).

Kyōkai's task differed from that of the Chinese monks who tried to demonstrate the profundity of Buddhist teachings in comparison with those of Confucianism and Taoism. Many fundamental questions concerning Buddhist teachings were asked and answered in the debates and writings of eminent Chinese monks obliged to delineate their positions in the face of anti-Buddhist propaganda and occasional persecutions. Japanese monks, on the other hand, were free from both the good and bad effects imposed by such a competitive situation. Their task lay in choosing the most effective scriptures or doctrines from the vast accumulation of materials in the Buddhist tradition. They accepted the Buddhist doctrines expounded by Chinese monks, and their concern was to apply them meaningfully to themselves, the people, and the state.

In the *Nihon ryōiki*, nirvana is mentioned only once in reference to Śākyamuni (III.30). Kyōkai's ideal is the bodhisattva who makes a vow to stay in this world in order to work for the salvation of all. By means of "maturing good stock and accumulating merit" the bodhisattva practices love for others in the world of samsara. The common goal is rebirth in this world, heaven, or the land of bliss. According to Kyōkai, some emperors and princes had been virtuous monks in their previous lives and had accumulated enough merit to be born into the imperial family. For this reason they deserved to be revered and obeyed (III.39).

In contrast to the understanding of the law of causation as the law of nature, the *Hoke-kyō* gives another interpretation which may have influenced Kyōkai. The *Hoke-kyō* is the scripture most frequently quoted in the *Nihon ryōiki*, and it has been extremely popular throughout the history of Japanese Buddhism. Although the *Hoke-kyō* makes



many references to karma (Chaps. i, ii, vii, x, xii, xv, xvi, xix, xxv),<sup>143</sup> the main emphasis is on overcoming karma and obtaining salvation, rather than on the doctrine of karma itself. The recitation of the *Hoke-kyō* or even the invocation of its title, when done with faith, constitutes an act of merit which will overcome all other karma. Further, it says that dharani and mantra (Chap. xxvi), a remembrance of Kannon, or the calling of Kannon's name (Chap. xxv) also transcend time and space, making possible the immediate attainment of Buddhahood. This message of the *Hoke-kyō* may be considered as a warning against a mechanical, static, or deterministic understanding of karma. Faith is the basis for salvation here and now, which is the work of the dharma-body Buddha, both transcendent and immanent.

#### b. *The Influence of Chinese Buddhist Literature*

Japanese literature was gradually shaped under the influence of the Chinese classics which were brought to Japan in the fifth century, and the vast amount of Buddhist writing that followed the official introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century (I.Preface). The earliest works of literature which have been preserved are the *Kojiki*<sup>144</sup> and *Nihon shoki*,<sup>145</sup> historical records written in the early eighth century, and patterned on Chinese historical works such as the *Han shu* (History of Former Han Dynasty), *Hou-Han shu* (History of Later Han Dynasty), and *Shih chi* (Records of the Historian), which clearly show that the influence of Buddhist literature is readily apparent in them.<sup>146</sup>

Since the *Nihon ryōiki* is the first collection of Buddhist legends in Japan, the heavy influence of earlier Chinese literature is to be expected in almost every aspect of its style, form, content, motif, and arrangement. As to the depth and extent of the influence, however, scholars differ in opinion. Some maintain that most of the legends were borrowed directly from the Chinese tradition and simply rephrased.<sup>147</sup> Others hold that the legends must have been accepted and believed by the people who transmitted them, concluding that, in spite of their partial foreign origin, their popularity stamps them as Japanese.<sup>148</sup>

Kyōkai stated his editorial principles as follows:

My work is comparable to a rough pebble. . . . Its source in the

143. Kamimura Shinjō, "Chūgoku Tendai to Hoke shisō no renkan," *Hoke-kyō no shisō to bunka*, ed. by Sakamoto, 550-555.

144. *Kojiki* (NKBT, 1), ed. by Kurano and Takeda; D. L. Philippi, *Kojiki*.

145. *Nihon shoki* (NKBT, 67-68), ed. by Sakamoto Tarō and others; Aston, "Nihongi."

146. Kojima Noriyuki, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku to Chūgoku bungaku*, I, 241-255.

147. Haga Yaichi, *Kōshō Konjaku monogatari shū*, I, 3.

148. Hori Ichirō, *Nihon jōdai bunka to Bukkyō*, 187.

oral tradition is so indistinct that I am afraid of omitting much [I.Preface].

However, I cannot suppress my passion to do good, so I dare to write down oral traditions [at the risk of] soiling clean paper with mistakes [II.Preface].

According to what I had heard, I selected oral traditions and put down miraculous events, dividing them into good and evil [III.39, Postscript].

It is evident from his repeated references to an oral tradition there were many stories circulating among the monks in Nara and that some of these stories had already been written down. The fact that Kyōkai's quotations from scriptures are not faithful to the letter of the text suggests his dependence on previous writings and a frequent use of anthologies rather than the original texts.<sup>149</sup> We cannot trace the source of all these quotations because of the vast body of writings in the Buddhist Canon and because some of the works extant in Kyōkai's lifetime are no longer available.<sup>150</sup> However, a list has been prepared of the Chinese Buddhist literature that might have influenced Kyōkai in compiling the *Nihon ryōiki*. It consists of two categories of works: anthologies of scriptures and biographies edited by monks, and legends collected by lay Buddhists. The aim of the *Nihon ryōiki* was to combine these two types of literature.

The quotations from scriptures in the *Nihon ryōiki* may be divided into four categories: first, direct quotations from the original texts; second, indirect quotations which match passages in anthologies rather than the original texts; third, rephrased quotations; fourth, apparent quotations whose sources cannot be located. As the second category is the largest (13 out of 44 cases), it is evident that Kyōkai was more familiar with anthologies than with the original texts of scriptures, except in the case of the *Hoke-kyō* and probably the *Nehan-gyō* 涅槃經,<sup>151</sup> which are quoted several times. The inclusion of materials from the third and fourth categories suggests that some legends were transmitted orally before they were compiled by Kyōkai.<sup>152</sup> Many scriptures in the Buddhist Canon are filled with colorful Indian leg-

149. See Appendix C.

150. Kariya Ekisai wrote a pioneer work tracing quotations to their sources (see his *Nihon ryōiki kōshō*). Recent works done by Tokushi Yūshō ("Nihon ryōiki ni inyō seru kyōkan ni suite," *Bukkyō kenkyū*, I [No. 2, February 1937], 51-65) and Haraguchi Hiroshi ("Nihon ryōiki shūten goku kanken," *Kuntengo to kuniten shiryō*, No. 34 [December 1966], 53-67) are to be noted.

151. *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* 大般涅槃經 (*Taishō*, XII, No. 374, 365-604; No. 375, 605-832).

152. Uematsu Shigeru, *Kodai setsuwa bungaku*, 116-142.



ends about deities, men, and animals depicted in Buddhist terms. These legends incorporated the Buddhist teachings of karma within several types of stories such as *jātaka*, *avadāna*, and *nidāna*.<sup>153</sup> Their influence was great not only on later Buddhist literature but on the development of lay Buddhism in particular. The translation of the Buddhist Canon in China led to the compilation of many anthologies of legends taken from the scriptures. They were arranged thematically in order to serve as handbooks for Buddhist studies.

Among them, the *Shokyō yōshū* (*Chu-ching yao-chi*) was decisive in its influence on Kyōkai's life and work.<sup>154</sup> Kyōnichī, the mendicant who appeared in Kyōkai's dream, gave him a copy of it, saying that it was an excellent scripture for instructing the people (III.38). The *Shokyō yōshū*, compiled in 659 by the Chinese monk Tao-shih (d. 683), consists of important passages from the scriptures arranged thematically. Its purpose was to instruct monks; the author gives an exegesis of doctrine at the beginning of each section, followed by illustrations. The major themes of this work are karmic retribution and the veneration of the Three Treasures. As far as themes are concerned, the *Nihon ryōiki* followed the priorities of the *Shokyō yōshū*.<sup>155</sup> The latter was compiled to summarize Buddhist teachings in a systematic way using scriptural passages as illustrations, while the former arranged the stories from the Japanese tradition, both oral and written, in historical sequence. The style of the headings of the stories is similar.<sup>156</sup>

In addition to the *Shokyō yōshū*, two other works seem to have been favorites of Kyōkai. In the preface he says:

In China, the *Myōhōki* (Record of Invisible Work of Karmic Retribution) was compiled, and, during the great T'ang dynasty, the *Hannya kenki* (A Collection of Miraculous Stories concerning the *Kongō hannya-kyō*) was written. Since we respect the docu-

153. *Jātaka* is a story which tells how Śākyamuni accumulated merits in his former lives; *avadāna* is a type of story about a hero who is a disciple or follower of Śākyamuni, and whose past karma is described by Buddha; *nidāna* is a tale of how a Buddhist precept originated. See Iwamoto Yutaka, *Bukkyō setsuwa kenkyū josetsu*, 26-43; Edward J. Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, Appendix I, 261-287.

154. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 14.

155. The headings of the *Shokyō yōshū* are as follows: (1) Three Treasures: Veneration of Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha; (2) Veneration of Pagodas; (3) Meditation; (4) Renunciation; (5) Adoration; (6) Incense and Lamps; (7) Receiving Invitations; (8) Starting a Fast; (9) Ending a Fast; (10) Wealth; (11) Poverty; (12) Advocating the Way; (13) Repaying Kindness; (14) Saving Life; (15) Attaining Merits; (16) Selecting Friends; (17) Thoughtfulness; (18) Six Virtues (Donations, Keeping Precepts, Perseverance, Hard Work, Meditation, and Wisdom); (19) Karmic Causation; (20) Desires and Illusions; (21) Four Kinds of Birth; (22) Receiving Consequences of Retribution; (23) Ten Evils; (24) Deception; (25) Falling into Pride; (26) Liquor and Meat; (27) Divination; (28) Hell; (29) Funerals; (30) Miscellaneous.

156. Katayose Masayoshi, *Konjaku monogatarishū no kenkyū*, I, 404-413.

ments of foreign lands, should we not also believe and stand in awe of the miraculous events in our own land? [I.Preface].

By the beginning of the Heian period the *Myōhōki* was known to Japan, where its three volumes have been preserved.<sup>157</sup> Except for five stories in the third volume, most of the stories seem to be based on the Chinese oral tradition. In the preface to the work, T'ang-lin says that he also followed earlier works of Buddhist literature.<sup>158</sup> The *Hoke-kyō* is the most popular scripture in the *Myōhōki* as well as in the *Nihon ryōiki*. In both works the stories begin with the date and name of the central figure and teach the law of causation through the interpretation of miraculous events. Both T'ang-lin and Kyōkai were Buddhists, but the fact that the former was a layman while the latter was a monk may explain several differences between their respective works. Kyōkai dealt sympathetically with self-ordained monks who had not studied Buddhist doctrine and who violated Buddhist precepts and the *Sōni-ryō*. At the same time, in spite of his identification with the common people, he was aware of his status as a monk of a great state temple with a clerical rank. T'ang-lin, on the other hand, was critical of the corrupt clergy. T'ang-lin records the source of each story at its end, while Kyōkai concludes each story with a note (*san* 讃) or his comment which is often accompanied by scriptural quotations to draw a moral from the story.<sup>159</sup>

The "Hannya kenki" mentioned in the preface quoted above may have introduced the style of a note following a story. It is known in full as the *Kongō hannya-kyō jikkenki*,<sup>160</sup> a collection of miraculous stories about the *Kongō hannya-kyō* thematically arranged.<sup>161</sup> We do

157. The original text does not exist in China, for it was probably lost soon after its transmission to Japan. Extant manuscripts in Japan are incomplete, but nearly eighty stories have been reconstructed from quotations in other works. See *ibid.*, I, 350-385.

158. They are the *Kanzeon reigenki* (*Kuan-shih-yin ling-yen chi*) 觀世音緣驗記, *Sengenki* (*Hsiian-yen chi*) 宣驗記, and *Myōshōki* (*Ming-hsiang chi*) 冥祥記.

159. In the *Nihon ryōiki* there are fifteen stories accompanied by a concluding remark which begins with "The note says . . ." Their distribution is as follows:

I.5, 6, 14, 18, 22, 25, 33

II.2, 21, 42

III.1, 4, 10, 12, 30

In Chinese historical writings a passage known as a *isan* (san) is appended to a biography and used to summarize the writer's opinion of its central figure. Hui-chiao adopted this device in his *Kao-seng chuan*. Since the note is generally written in four-character phrases, it may indicate Kyōkai's desire to conform to Chinese style and his dependence on preceding literary works. Sometimes Kyōkai adds his comment after the note; this has given rise to the speculation that the note was not written by Kyōkai at all but that the story, along with the note, was borrowed by him from an earlier work.

160. Iwabuchi Etsutarō, "Nihon ryōiki ni mietaru Hannya kenki towa nanika," *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, XII (No. 8, 1935), 61-67; Katayose, *Konjaku monogatarishū no kenkyū*, I, 388-389.

161. It consists of three volumes, each divided into two sections: Vol. I: (1) Salvation and Protection; (2) Protection. Vol. II: (1) Making up for Sins; (2) Divine Power. Vol. III: (1) Merits; (2) Sympathy for the Faithful.



not know when it was introduced into Japan, but by the early Heian period, when the *Nihon ryōiki* was written, it was popular and known as the *Hannya kenki*, although it was no longer mentioned in China. It contributed a story to the *Nihon ryōiki* (II.24), and also suggested the idea for a separate preface for each volume. Its popularity lasted throughout the Heian period.

Kyōkai's dependence on these three works as his models is proved by a comparison of the content of the stories in them. It reveals that the *Myōhōki* furnished eight stories, the *Shōkyō yōshū*, four, and the *Kongō hannya-kyō jikkenki*, one story in the *Nihon ryōiki*, where all are retold as Japanese stories.<sup>162</sup> A study of these earlier Chinese works shows that their main theme was karmic retribution, particularly in the works written by lay Buddhists. There is little doubt that the *Nihon ryōiki* was influenced by and patterned on them, and in this sense was dependent on the Chinese Buddhist tradition. However, there are differences which should be noted. Kyōkai's chronological arrangement of Japanese stories<sup>163</sup> was probably influenced by Japanese historical works such as the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Shoku Nihongi*, for the Chinese works discussed above are not chronologically arranged. However, we must admit that Chinese stories are presented in a historical fashion by indicating the sources, even though they are thematically classified. Kyōkai, on the other hand, did not give the sources for his stories. The *Nihon ryōiki* has the quality of a chronicle, but at the same time much of the content is legendary. It is not factual history, but history seen from a Buddhist viewpoint, even though it lacks the consistency of a causal narrative and remains a collection of separate stories. It became the precursor of a new genre of narrative history which eventually in the tenth century replaced the court chronicles that had been modeled on the Chinese pattern.

In addition to the established sources mentioned above, there are numerous other possible sources. Recent studies in comparative literature suggest an increasing number of correlations between Japanese and foreign literature and the oral transmission of legends from the continent to Japan. It is extremely difficult to document the latter, but

162. The *Myōhōki* offers the plots to the following stories of the *Nihon ryōiki* (I.7, 10, 18; II.5, 10, 19; III.10, 13). The *Shōkyō yōshū* gives four, of which two (I.4; III.1) are originally from the *Kao-seng chuan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks); one (I.17) is from the *Hsiao-tzu chuan* (Biographies of Filial Sons); and one (II.3) is from the *Zōhōzō-kyō* 雜寶藏經. The *Kongō hannya-kyō jikkenki* offers one (II.24) which is also adopted in the *Myōhōki*.

163. The first volume begins with a story from Emperor Yūryaku's reign (late fifth century) and ends with a story from Emperor Shōmu's reign, dated in 727. The second volume comprises stories which range from 729 to 763. The third volume covers the period from Empress Kōken's reign to Emperor Saga's reign, 749-822. See Appendix A.

there are two significant cases worthy of note. One is the legend centering about Prince Shōtoku while the other concerns E no Ozunu.

The *Nihon shoki* obviously mythologized Prince Shōtoku as the Dharma King, and the *Nihon ryōiki* contributed a story which is not found in the *Nihon shoki*. On a golden mountain Prince Shōtoku was given a jewel of the elixir of life by a monk in order that he might go back to the world of the living to propagate Buddhist teaching (I.5). The note following the story identifies this golden mountain with Mt. Wu-t'ai 五臺山 in Shansi province in China, a sacred mountain traditionally regarded as the place of Mañjuśrī's descent.<sup>164</sup> He was reborn a century later as a great patron of Buddhism, Emperor Shōmu. Tradition says he is an incarnation of Mañjuśrī. The same type of story is also found in the Korean Buddhist legends, compiled in the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事. One of these tells of a Korean preceptor named Chanjang 慈藏 of the seventh century, who met Mañjuśrī on Mt. Wu-t'ai in China. Mañjuśrī advised Chanjang to return to Silla and visit Mt. Odae where they would meet again. Another story concerns two princes who withdrew to Mt. Odae and met Mañjuśrī.<sup>165</sup> These legends are used to help legitimize Korean Buddhism and to make Silla the land of the eternally present Buddha. We conclude that the Mt. Wu-t'ai legends in China and Korea had great influence on the formation of the early Japanese legends, including that of Prince Shōtoku's encounter with Mañjuśrī. Each played, respectively, the same role of establishing Buddhism firmly on the native soil in the three lands.

A similar resemblance is found between the E no Ozunu legend in the *Nihon ryōiki* and the Hui-yüan legendary cycle as it is documented in "Lu-shan Yüan-kung hua" 廬山遠公話, discovered at Tun-huang.<sup>166</sup> Both Hui-yüan and E no Ozunu are said to have had an encounter with the local deity of the mountain where each one resided. As the "Lu-shan Yüan-kung hua" cannot be dated, it is impossible to prove its direct influence on the E no Ozunu legend. However, we may assume that these legends originally had little to do with Prince Shōtoku, E no Ozunu, or Hui-yüan, but that folk piety incorporated

164. Mt. Wu-t'ai is also known as Mt. Ch'ing-liang 清涼山. Tradition says that the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Monju-bosatsu 文殊菩薩) descended on its peak to convert the Chinese. Cf. Étienne Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," *T'oung Pao*, XLVIII (1960), 54-61; Ennin 圓仁, *Nittō gūhō jūn-reiki* 入唐求法巡禮記 (DBZ, 113), III, 237-238, 243; Edwin O. Reischauer, trans., *Ennin's Diary*, 246-247, 266.

165. Iryōn 一然, *Samguk yusa* (Taishō, XLIX, 590a). See Peter H. Lee, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks*, 9-10.

166. Stein, No. 2073. For a critically edited text, see Makita Tairyō, *Chūgoku kinsei Bukkyōshi kenkyū*, 287-311.



these historical figures as heroes into the various legends. Immigrant monks and student monks who had studied abroad probably transmitted such legends to Japan orally. We will discuss the symbolism of these legends more fully in the next chapter.

c. *Japanese Legendary Literature*

By the early ninth century, when the *Nihon ryōiki* was compiled, many works of Japanese literature had already been written. The *Nihon ryōiki*, following the *Manyōshū* 萬葉集,<sup>167</sup> begins with the story of Emperor Yūryaku who reigned in the fifth century (I.1). The idea of the land of the dead, *Yomi no kuni* 黄泉國, and a taboo on eating food cooked in that land (II.7) is probably drawn from the *Kojiki*, which was compiled in 712. The *Nihon ryōiki* is the earliest work to support the *Nihon shoki*'s date of 552 for the official introduction of Buddhism, as against the traditional dating of 538. Kyōkai closely followed the tradition of the court histories, although there is some doubt about his familiarity with the *Shoku Nihongi* which was compiled in 797. If the *Nihon ryōiki* was compiled in 787 (Enryaku 6) as some scholars assert, it would have been impossible for him to have consulted the *Shoku Nihongi*. However, if the *Nihon ryōiki* was compiled during the Kōnin era (810–824) as we have concluded, he might have made use of it. When we compare passages on E no Ozunu and Gyōgi in these two works, we find that the story in the *Nihon ryōiki* is a development of the one in the *Shoku Nihongi*. Since Kyōkai sought to make his work a history of dharma existing in Japan, he must have been interested in the newly compiled history which covers approximately the same historical period. On the other hand, it may be argued that he simply used older private records, which differed in some instances from the sources for the court history. This hypothesis is supported by a few references made by Kyōkai to records otherwise unknown.

According to a record, in the reign of Emperor Bitatsu, sounds of musical instruments were heard off the coast of Izumi province [I.5].

According to a record, in the second month of the ninth year . . . , an imperial order was given to the officials . . . [I.25].

There seem to have been some historical documents apart from the court tradition. The former passage differs from the *Nihon shoki*, which dates that event in the reign of Emperor Kinmei.<sup>168</sup> No passage corresponding to the latter can be found in the court history.

167. *Manyōshū* (NKBT, 4–7), ed. by Takagi Ichinosuke, Gomi Tomohide, and Ōno Susumu. See the *Manyōshū*, trans. by J. L. Pierson.

168. *Nihon shoki*, XIX (Kinmei 14:5:7). See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 68.

The following passage implies that a private record of a miraculous event was in circulation.

As Hirokuni visited the land of the dead and saw the karmic retribution of good and evil, he recorded it for circulation [I.30].

A close comparison between the descriptions of the same historical figures in the *Nihon ryōiki* and the *Shoku Nihongi* may illuminate the degree of Kyōkai's dependency on the court histories. Princes and nobles who appear in the two works are those who were involved in rebellion and political intrigues.<sup>169</sup> Although Kyōkai tries to explain the violent death of the rebels as being the result of their evil deeds in the past, he concurs with the judgment in the court history except in the case of two men (III.36, 37). These two are not rebels but loyal courtiers who are praised in the court history but condemned by Kyōkai as sufferers in hell because of their offences against the Three Treasures. However, they were eventually saved. The adaptation of these two stories illustrates Kyōkai's intention to preach the inescapability of suffering in hell. Tale 38 of the third volume closely parallels accounts in the *Shoku Nihongi*. The same is true with the *Nihon shoki* and *Nihon ryōiki*. Therefore, it seems clear that Kyōkai was familiar with the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku Nihongi*, depended on them for historical dates and events, but interpreted them according to the law of karmic causation.

It is extremely difficult to learn about the oral tradition before the compilation of the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Fudoki* 風土記 (Topographic Records).<sup>170</sup> However, many myths and legends in these early writings reflect the rich local traditions that had existed throughout Japan for several centuries before they were written down. Some found their way into the court histories and poetry, while others served as the basis for stories of the founding of shrines and temples, the genealogy of families, folk etymology, and folk tales. The *Nihon ryōiki* shares with other early texts such ancient motifs as divine marriage, descent of deities, marriage between a human being and an animal, or visits to the other world. For instance, the section of the *Suminoe no taisha jindaiki* 住吉大社神代記 (Ancient History of the Great Shrine of Suminoe)<sup>171</sup> which deals with legend, written in part in 659

169. Prince Nagaya (II.1), Prince Uji (II.35), Princes Funado, Kifumi, and Shioyaki (III.38); Tachibana no Naramaro (II.40), Fujiwara no Nagate (III.36), Saheki no Itachi (III.37), Fujiwara no Nakamaro and Tanetsugu (III.38), etc. Fukushima Kōichi, "Nihon ryōiki ni arawareta Kyōkai no kangaekata," *Heian bungaku* (Kokubungaku ronsō, 3), 99–138.

170. They were compiled between 713 and 733, and five of them are extant: Hitachi 常陸, Izumo 出雲, Harima 播磨, Bungo 豊後, and Hizen 肥前. Several others exist only in fragments. See *Fudoki* (NKBT, 2), ed. by Akimoto Kichirō.

171. Tanaka Takashi, *Sumiyoshi taisha shi* (History of Great Shrine of Sumiyoshi [originally Suminoc]), Vol. I, Appendix I.



and 702, gives a local version of the mythological tradition which differs from the corresponding section in the *Nihon shoki*. Many Buddhist temples have in their historical records "origin tales," which are found to be of the same genre as the *Nihon ryōiki*. For instance, "The Founding of Hase-dera" 長谷寺縁起,<sup>172</sup> compiled in 741, gives an origin tale structurally similar to some stories in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

The *Nihon ryōiki* is the earliest collection of such legends selected to clarify the Buddhist teaching of karmic retribution. It includes origin tales, anecdotes of saints, and folktales, which are partly historical and partly fictional. Out of twelve origin tales, seven refer to temples (I.5, 7, 17; II.5, 21, 31, 39), three to painted or sculptured images (I.33; III.17, 30), one to a hill (I.1), and one to a family (I.2). There are many anecdotes about historical figures, for Kyōkai wanted to show dharma working in human history.

As stated above, Kyōkai used as his sources not only the oral tradition of his time but also written traditions both Japanese and foreign. According to Uematsu, nearly 90 percent of the stories had been handed down by monks or local people before they reached Kyōkai. He was by no means a creative writer, but rather an editor and commentator on the tradition he worked so faithfully to document.<sup>173</sup> Although isolated legends had existed for several centuries, Japanese legendary literature was not born until a special set of conditions came into existence. It is clear that the corpus of Buddhist legends that had originated in India, developed in China, and been transmitted to Japan greatly stimulated and influenced the development of indigenous Japanese legends.

Thus the *Nihon ryōiki* created a form of literature called "legendary literature," and served as the fountainhead for later writings. In legendary literature the author neither expresses his ideas nor describes society as directly as he does in other genres. The object of his interest is man, and he selects a motif which matches his creative purpose from among extant legends in order to explore the nature of humanity. The *Nihon ryōiki* was followed in the same century by the *Nihon kanryōroku* 日本感靈錄 (Japanese Record of Miraculous Events),<sup>174</sup> which is indebted to the former in both content and form.<sup>175</sup> The next two centuries may be called the golden age of legendary literature, during which the great popularity of the *Nihon ryōiki* continued.

172. "Hase-dera engi," *Shoji engi-shū* 諸寺縁起集 (DBZ, 118), 326-333.

173. Uematsu Shigeru, *Kodai setsuwa bungaku*, 141.

174. *Nihon kanryōroku* (ZGR, XXVB, Book 717).

175. Nagai Yoshinori, *Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, I, 147-154.

In the tenth century the *Nihon ryōiki* tradition is represented by two works which are somewhat dissimilar in nature. One is the *Sanbō ekotoba* 三寶繪詞 (Notes on Pictorial Presentations of the Three Treasures) written for a princess by Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲 in 984.<sup>176</sup> It consists of three volumes, which correspond to Buddha, Dharma and Samgha, and it incorporates seventeen stories from the *Nihon ryōiki*. The other work is the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* 日本往生極樂記 (Biographies of the Japanese Who Were Born in the Land of Bliss) compiled by Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤 between 985 and 987.<sup>177</sup> In a note the author explains why he included Prince Shōtoku and Gyōgi among those who were born in the land of bliss. Originally he had not intended to do so, but he altered his intention in order to comply with the last wishes of Prince Kaneaki. He distinguished Prince Shōtoku and Gyōgi from the others he described by identifying them as "appearances of the two incarnated bodhisattvas,"<sup>178</sup> and making Prince Shōtoku's biography several times longer than other biographies. Since these two men were not known for their belief and rebirth in the pure land, the author must have hesitated to include them.

The function of the *Nihon ryōiki* as a casebook for preachers was carried on in works such as the *Uchigikishū* 打聞集 (Collection of Sermons)<sup>179</sup> and *Hyakuza hōdan kikigakishō* 百座法談聞書抄 (Summary Notes of One Hundred Lectures on Dharma)<sup>180</sup> in the twelfth century. The faith in the *Hoke-kyō* was singled out as the subject for the *Dainihon Hoke-kyō kenki* 大日本法華經驗記 (Records of Wonders Related to the *Hoke-kyō* in Japan).<sup>181</sup> The narrative aspects of the *Nihon ryōiki* found their fullest expression in the *Konjaku monogatari-shū* 今昔物語集 (Collection of Tales Present and Past)<sup>182</sup> and *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 (Tales from the Later Gleanings of Uji),<sup>183</sup> the most famous and admired works of the legendary literature.

Kyōkai's custom of adding personal comments and morals after each story developed into the genre of moralizing legends which

176. Yamada Yoshio, ed. and annot., *Sanbō ekotoba ryakuchū*.

177. Yoshishige no Yasutane, *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* (*Gunsho nijū*, IV, Book 66; SGR, III).

178. *Ibid.* (SGR, III, 726a). 按國史別傳等 入二菩薩應迹之事焉。

179. *Uchigikishū* (photostat ed.), Koten hozonkai.

180. *Hyakuza hōdan kikigakishō*, ed. by Satō Akio.

181. Chingen, *Honchō Hoke kenki* (ZGR, VIIIA, Book 194).

182. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (NKBT, 22-26), ed. by Yamada Yoshio, Tadao, Hideo, and Toshio. For a selected translation of thirty-seven stories, see E. O. Jones, *Agas Age*. It is also called *Konjaku monogatari*.

183. *Uji shūi monogatari* (NKBT, 27), ed. by Watanabe Tsunaya and Nishio Kōichi. For a selected translation of fifty-five tales (out of one hundred and ninety-four), see John S. Forster, "Uji shūi monogatari," *Monumenta Nipponica*, XX (No. 1-2, 1965), 135-208.



flourished in the Kamakura period and produced introspective works such as the *Hōshinshū* 發心集 (Collection of Tales for Awakening Faith)<sup>184</sup> and *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (Collection of Sand and Stone).<sup>185</sup> They fit well into the genre of essays. Kyōkai's interest in writing a history was carried on partly in the biographical writings such as the *Ōjōden* series,<sup>186</sup> and partly in interpretative histories such as the *Fusō ryakki* (Concise Chronicle of Japan)<sup>187</sup> and the *Gukanshō* 愚管抄 (Miscellany of Ignorant Views).<sup>188</sup>

It is evident that later works surpass the *Nihon ryōiki* in literary refinement, historicity, and depth of introspection. However, the merit of the *Nihon ryōiki* lies in its simple affirmation of faith and its diversity of interests and views. Though no one would deny the influence of Chinese tradition, the *Nihon ryōiki* is, nonetheless, Japanese in the sense that it was not only accepted by the people at the time of its compilation but also helped to shape the later Japanese tradition.

184. *Hōshinshū* (*Kamo no Chōmei zenshū*), ed. by Yanase Kazuo.

185. Mujū 無住, *Shasekishū* (NKBT, 85), ed. by Watanabe Tsunaya.

186. See Shigematsu Akihisa, "Ōjōden no kenkyū," *Nagoya daigaku bungakubu kenkyū ronshū*, XXIII (1960), 1-124; *Ōjōden no kenkyū*, ed. by Kōten isan no kai. The following seven works are classified as *Ōjōden*: *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* (see n. 177); *Dainihon Hoke-kyō kenki* (see n. 181); *Zoku honchō ōjōden* by Ōe no Masafusa (*Gunsho ruijū*, IV, Book 66, SGR, III); *Shūi ōjōden* and *Goshūi ōjōden* by Miyoshi no Tameyasu (ZGR, VIII, Books 196, 197); *Honchō shūshū ōjōden* by Fujiwara no Munetomo (ZGR, Book 199); and *Sange ōjōki* by Renzen (ZGR, Book 198).

187. Kōen, *Fusō ryakki* (SZKT, XII).

188. Jien, *Gukanshō* (NKBT, 86), ed. by Okami Masao and Akamatsu Toshihide. For a partial translation, see J. Rahder, "Miscellany of Personal Views of an Ignorant Fool," *Acta Orientalis*, XV (1936), 173-230; XVI (1937), 59-77.

## CHAPTER II

# World View Reflected

### (I) COSMIC ORDER

#### a. Rites of Cosmic Renewal

In ancient Japan the religious life of the people frequently found expression in a variety of cyclical rites performed at court, at local shrines, and in private homes. The state cult performed at the court consisted primarily of communal agricultural rites at times of planting and harvest, and prayers for the protection of the crops and the community in spring and summer. On the last day of the sixth and twelfth months, the rite of purification (*Ōharae* 大祓) took place, during which the law prescribed that both native prayers<sup>1</sup> and formulas of Chinese origin should be recited to expiate defilement and insure happiness.<sup>2</sup>

The introduction of Buddhism did not affect the observance of these rites. At first Buddhist rites were performed on behalf of the sick and the dead, while traditional rites continued to be observed at the New Year, at planting and harvest, and in prayers offered for the community. Such a division of function gradually disappeared, and monks were invited to the court to pray for the nation's protection from natural disaster.<sup>3</sup> Buddhism increased its claims by adopting indigenous rites, reinterpreting them, and providing them with a new symbolic meaning. For example, from the time of Śākyamuni the confession of sins had been one of the most important rites in the sangha, and many scriptures taught the merit of confession and repentance.<sup>4</sup> Beginning in the seventh century the rite of repentance (*keka* 悔過) was held in the Japanese court on various occasions.<sup>5</sup> This rite usually took the form of a devotional service which centered on a Buddha or bodhisattva mentioned in a particular scripture. In the eighth century a rite of repentance based on the *Saishō-kyō* [*Kichijō-*

1. Norito, ed. by Takeda Yūkichi (NKBT, 1, 422-427). See Philippi, trans., *Norito: A New Translation of the Ancient Ritual Prayers*; E. Satow and K. Florents, "Ancient Japanese Rituals," *TASJ*, reprint, II (December 1927), 5-143.

2. *Ryō no gige*, "Jingi-ryō," Articles 2-9, 18. See Sansom, "Early Japanese Law," Part Two, 123-126.

3. *Shoku Nihongi*, IX (Jinki 2:1:17).

4. See *Sharihōsu keka-kyō* 舍利弗悔過經 (*Taishō*, XXIV, No. 1492) for its full exposition.

5. *Shoku Nihongi*, XXV (*Hakuchi* 2:12:30, 3:12:30).



*keka* 吉祥悔過)<sup>6</sup> was celebrated at all provincial temples during the first week of the year to pray for the prosperity of the state.<sup>7</sup>

This practice gradually spread, accompanied by the belief that the sins of the outgoing year should be confessed and expiated. It fulfilled the same function as the traditional rite of *Ōharae*, although Buddhism emphasized the internal significance of the ceremony. The *Nihon ryōiki* gives an example of a man who wanted to atone for his sins by holding a ceremony of repentance at the end of the year (I.10). He invited a monk to recite a Mahayana scripture<sup>8</sup> and to officiate at the ritual of repentance. Eventually it was discovered that the deceased father of the man had been born as an ox and had suffered as a consequence of his past karma. Owing to the merit of the man's faith in the Three Treasures<sup>9</sup> and the monk's helpful guidance, the father was released from such a life of suffering. The rite of repentance, which aimed at removing anything that might hinder meditation and the enlightenment of monks in the Indian samgha, became a meritorious act for those who sponsored the ceremony in China or Japan.

Another prominent change was introduced with Buddhism: dread of defilement by the dead was replaced by a sense of veneration for the dead. In contemporary Japan, the visit of the dead to their former homes is popularly celebrated at the *Bon* festival, July 15,<sup>10</sup> but in the *Nihon ryōiki* there are indications of a belief that the dead visited the living on New Year's Eve and that it was customary to make offerings for a ceremonial meal with them at the family altar.

Dōtō, a Buddhist scholar of Koryō 高麗, was a monk of Gangō-ji. . . . Once, when he was passing through the valley . . . , he saw a skull which had been trampled by men and animals. In sorrow, he had his attendant Maro 萬侶 place it on a tree.

6. Or *Kishō-keka*; in the *Konkōmyō saishō-kyō* (VIII, 16, 17; IX, 22) Kichijōten 吉祥天 (Śrīdevī or Lakṣmī), female deity of felicity, promises to bestow wealth and prosperity to the followers of that scripture. Cf. Gerda Hartmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Göttin Lakṣmī*.

7. *Shoku Nihongi*, XVII (Tenpyō shōhō 1:12:18, 25); XXII (Tenpyō hōji 3:6:22); XXVIII (Jingo keiun 1:1:8), etc.

8. *Hōkō-kyō* 方廣經; since the term is used for Mahāyāna scriptures in general it is impossible to determine what particular scripture is meant; possibly the reference is to *Daitō hōkō sange metsuzai shōgon jōbutsu-kyō* 大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經 (*Taishō*, LXXXV, No. 2871) forged in China during the Sui dynasty. The forgery attests to the popularity of this rite in China; the rite was transmitted to Japan before 731.

9. See Chap. II(3)b.

10. A shortened form of *Urabon* 盂蘭盆. (In many rural areas it is still celebrated according to the lunar calendar.) For the latest theory on the etymological and historical origin of the cult of *Urabon*, see Iwamoto, *Mokuren densetsu to Urabon*, 225-245. According to Iwamoto, the term *Urabon* comes from *urvan*, which is "soul" in Avestan; it came to denote an agricultural rite in honor of ancestral spirits which was celebrated in the Central Asia, northern India, and China. In China the cult was assimilated into Buddhist and Taoist traditions. For the traditional theory, see Ashikaga Enshō, "Notes on Urabon," *JAOS*, 71 (1951), 71-75.

On the New Year's Eve of the same year, a man came to the temple gate, saying, "I would like to see the Venerable Dōtō's attendant Maro." When Maro came out to see him, he said, "Thanks to the mercy of your master, I have been happy and at peace. And I can repay your kindness only on this evening" [I.12].

There is another version of this story (III.27). These two stories share the motif of "the grateful dead" which is found in folktales elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The dead man appears in a human form and asks his benefactor to join the ceremonial meal at the end of the year to help rectify evil deeds. New Year's Eve is the time for repentance and the renewing of the cosmic and moral order, and the family altar is prepared for the ceremony. It is a chaotic time when barriers between the dead and the living, present and future, this world and the world of the dead, dissolve.<sup>12</sup>

This renewal of the cosmos may take place not only annually but daily, seasonally, and at the beginning of every era or emperor's reign. For example, there are two stories in which the hungry ghosts<sup>13</sup> or wicked spirits come to devour the living at midnight (I.3; II.33). The notion of cosmic renewal was reflected in the ancient custom of building a new palace and changing the name of the era every time a new emperor was enthroned. The ceremony at the enthronement symbolized cosmic unity and renewal, and is similar in form to the harvest festival; in addition, it emphasizes the emperor's union with the ancestral spirits.<sup>14</sup>

The practice of using era names, which was initiated in 645, was obviously influenced by the Chinese system. During the Asuka and Nara periods covered by the *Nihon ryōiki*, the naming of the era took place so often that in one instance the same year was named twice.<sup>15</sup> We may ascribe this practice to the great influence of Chinese cosmological thought, which was so highly systematized during the Han dynasty. All natural phenomena and human affairs were believed to be governed by two principles, *yin* and *yang*, which complement each other and follow the unchanging law of Heaven. A mysterious cor-

11. According to Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-literature*, this type of folktale is indexed E. 341.

12. Cf. Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 54.

13. *Gaki* 餓鬼 (Skt. *preta*); frustrated spirits wandering among men and hells without means to gratify their desires. See Chap. I(2)a, n. 127.

14. See Orikuchi Shinobu, "Ōmube matsuri no hongi," *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*, III, 174-240; Robert Ellwood, "Harvest and Renewal at the Grand Shrine of Ise," *Numen*, XV (No. 3, November 1968), 165-190.

15. The year 749 is the twenty-first year of the Tenpyō era, and the first year of the Tenpyō-kanpō and Tenpyō-shōhō eras.



respondence between nature and man was recognized in all phenomena as a consequence of the interaction of these two forces. Seasonal vicissitudes, a man's life and death, human relationships, and history were all explained in terms of *yin* and *yang*, and any disharmony and abnormality in the human world inevitably stirred Heaven to manifest corresponding abnormal phenomena in the natural world.<sup>16</sup> Such phenomena were known as "visitations" (*tsai* 災) or "prodigies" (*yi* 異)<sup>17</sup> and were interpreted as Heaven's warnings to the ruler, while the appearance of unusual birds and animals or events were considered to be signs of Heaven's sanction and blessing. Accordingly, whenever and wherever such occurrences took place, the court was notified and sometimes the unusual animals and birds were presented to the court. On such occasions the emperor might wish to change the name of the era, naming it after felicitous omens such as a white pheasant (Hakuchi 白雉), a vermilion bird (Akamidori 朱鳥), a sacred tortoise (Reiki 靈龜), a divine tortoise (Jinki 神龜), or symbolical phrases or events such as universal peace (Tenpyō 天平), universal peace and excellent treasure (Tenpyō shōhō 天平勝寶), universal peace and precious script (Tenpyō hōji 天平寶字). The emperor's decision to change the name of the era represented the abolishment of the past and the initiation of a new period.

With such a cosmological frame of reference, praying for the dead and praying for the welfare of the nation were not separate actions. In the Asuka and Nara periods political intrigue and murder took place frequently, and people feared that natural disasters and epidemics were caused by the curses of the victims. Those in authority longed to return to a state of primordial unity by destroying the past and renewing life. This unity was realized in the ceremonial meal of the living and dead, in which the moral and cosmic order was renewed and re-established. Since Buddhism had been able to incorporate the ancestral cult and also taught a life after death, it seemed to offer a more comprehensive way to ensure happiness and prosperity. It was only natural that Buddhism should be patronized by emperors and empresses who keenly felt the need for peace and harmony provided by rites of cosmic renewal. Buddhist rites were performed in the traditional pattern and with similar aims.

The persistence of a symbolism of cosmic renewal in the Japanese

16. See Sawada Takio, "Tong chang-shu tenjin sōkansetsu shitan," *Nihon bunka kenkyūsho kiyō*, III (1967), 293-312; reprinted in the *Chūgoku kankei ronsetsu shiryō*, VIII (1967), Part One, 423-438. Ikeda Suetoshi, "Tendō to tenmei, Part I," *Hiroshima daigaku bungakubu kiyō*, XXVIII (No. 1, 1968), 24-39; reprinted in *Chūgoku kankei*, X (1968), Part One, 68-75.

17. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, 55.

tradition is evidenced by the fact that many of the rites mentioned above have continued to be observed throughout Japan's history. We can trace the rite of repentance and cosmic renewal in the tradition of Mt. Kōya, the headquarters of the Shingon School, which has faithfully preserved many ancient rituals. During the last four days of the year, December 28-31, Shingon Buddhist monks perform the rite of *Gohei hasami*. *Gohei* 御幣 is a Shinto symbol of the presence of kami and also an instrument for purification.<sup>18</sup> While reciting the *Hannya shin-gyō* 般若心經,<sup>19</sup> the monks make *gohei*, which are consecrated and enshrined in the temple until New Year's Eve. At midnight they are carried to the shrine and burned. Their embers are distributed to the congregation to make a new fire on New Year's Day.<sup>20</sup>

Buddhism served to internalize ancient Japanese rituals such as purification rites and ancestor rites. Traditional rituals and symbols persisted because of their significance for human life, although they were given new meanings.<sup>21</sup> Dharma was interpreted by Kyōkai as the universal law in the sense of *tao* 道. He included the way of kami, *yin-yang tao*, and all other ways in dharma itself, for dharma is universal and comprehensive, and there is common ground for them in the idea of cosmic interrelation of all existences. The cosmos can be renewed and restructured according to traditional patterns and rhythms of life, which Buddhism incorporated in its cosmology.

#### b. Symbolism of the Visit to the Other World

In Japanese literature prior to the *Nihon ryōiki*, there are legends in which heroes such as Urashima no ko 浦島子<sup>22</sup> and Tajimamori 田道間守<sup>23</sup> visit the other world beyond the sea. The *Yu-hsien-k'u* 遊仙窟,<sup>24</sup>

18. Also called *mitogura*; it consists of a twig or a stick with some strips of folded paper attached and is often held by a mediator; hence, it serves as an offering to kami.

19. *Hannya haramitsu shin-gyō* 般若波羅蜜心經 (*Taishō*, VIII, Nos. 250-255, 257). See Max Müller, trans., *The Larger and Smaller Prajñāpāramitāhdayasūtra*, *Buddhist Mahāyāna Text* (SBE, XLIX).

20. J. M. Kitagawa, "Gohei hasami—A Rite of Purification of Time at Mt. Kōya," *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of IAHR*, II, 173-174.

21. See Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology*, 86-107, for a general discussion of the function of symbols.

22. *Nihon shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 22:7): "Mizunoe no Urashimako of Tsutsukawa, Yoza district, Tanba province, went fishing on a boat. Eventually he caught a big tortoise, which turned into a woman. Thereupon, he felt desire and made love with her. Then they went into sea together and visited the land of immortality (常世國) to see a saint." See Aston, "Nihongi," I, 368. Also see other versions in the *Manyōshū* (NKBT, 5, No. 383); *Tango Fudōki*, *Fudōki* 風土記 (NKBT, 2, 470-477).

23. *Nihon shoki*, VI (Suinin 90:2:1); *Kojiki*, II (NKBT, 1, 202-203). See Aston, "Nihongi," I, 186; Philippi, *Kojiki*, 226.

24. Chinese novelle ascribed to Chang Chou 張翥 (7660-732). See *The Dwelling of Playful Goddess*, trans. by Howard S. Levy. For its influence on Japanese literature, see Kojima, *Jōdai Nihon bungaku*, II, 1013-1071; III, 1443-1456.



a Chinese novelette which enjoyed great popularity among educated people during the Nara and Heian periods, is a tale of a visit to the ideal land of immortals in the mountains.<sup>25</sup> The popularity of these tales suggests that the Taoist idea of the eternal land was accepted in Japan at an early date and spread widely from the seventh century.

“The other world” as a creation of popular imagination does not present a uniform image. However, several ideas of the other world found in the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Fudoki* may be classified as follows: a heavenly land known as Takamagahara 高天原, an underground land known as Yomi no kuni, which is a Japanese reading of the Chinese Huang-ch’üan-kuo or “Land of the Yellow Springs” 黃泉國, and a distant land beyond the sea known as Tokoyo no kuni 常世國. Although these categories are diverse in origin and nature, they are not necessarily exclusive of each other and together they suggest a common symbolic understanding of the other world.<sup>26</sup> For the ancient Japanese, the other world meant the land of the dead or the abode of kami or immortals which lies somewhere above, below, or beyond this world, where the living might visit under certain conditions.

Buddhist ideas of the other world fascinated those who lacked a well-delineated cosmology in China as well as in Japan. Just as the doctrines of karma and samsara were novel and appealing, so, too, were the ideas of paradise and hell, which offered a differentiated view of the other world, and the notion of judgment after death with a judge presiding. In the Indian tradition inherited by Buddhism, five or six levels of existence characterize the cosmos.<sup>27</sup> Although different peoples at different periods of their history had their own particular beliefs, there were also some basic similarities: the hells were located at the bottom; the heavens which housed the deities were on top; men and animals existed in between. One of the earliest Buddhist scriptures presents such a cosmic image:

The four lands [that is, Jambudvīpa in the south, Pūrvavidehadvīpa in the east, Avaragodāniyadvīpa in the west, and Uttarakurudvīpa in the north] are surrounded by eight thousand lands, which are again enclosed by the great ocean. There is a great mountain, Mt. Diamond, encircled by the waters and again by an outer mountain, a second Mt. Diamond. Between them there

is an abyss so deep that no light of the solar or lunar deities, although effective in the heavens, could penetrate it.<sup>28</sup> This abyss is hell (*naraka*).

When this conception of hell was introduced into China, it was transliterated as 奈落迦, or translated as 地獄, *ti-yü* or underground prison, and often combined with the name of T’ai shan 泰(太)山 or Mt. T’ai in early translations.<sup>29</sup> This was a device for presenting a new idea in old clothing to facilitate understanding and acceptance. In many regions of pre-Buddhist China, people venerated mountains as an abode of deities, and emperors and nobles made offerings on the mountains to pray for the prosperity of the land. T’ai shan in Shantung province gained national preeminence as the residence of the lord who was believed to control life and death, and as a gathering place for the spirits of the dead.<sup>30</sup> Taoist and Buddhist ascetics chose mountains for their retreats, seeking a better understanding of the mystery of the universe; they believed that deities, spirits, or Buddhas would appear and help them attain mystical knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Mountains were identified with the other world, including both the land of the dead and the land of immortals. However, before the introduction of Buddhist ideas, hell and paradise were not clearly differentiated.

The *Nihon ryōiki* does not present a uniform image of the other world. We can recognize a difference between the earlier and later tales: the former are more varied and reflect some pre-Buddhist but not necessarily indigenous ideas, while the latter tend to be stereotyped and patterned on the Buddhist tradition. Fourteen of the one hundred and sixteen stories that share the same motif of a visit to the other world, are distributed as follows:

Vol.	Tale	Reign	Year
I.	5	Empress Suiko	593-628
	30	Emperor Monmu	697-707
II.	5, 7, 16, 19, 25	Emperor Shōmu	724-748
III.	9	Empress Shōtoku	764-770
	22, 23, 26, 37	Emperor Kōnin	771-780
	35, 36	Emperor Kanmu	781-796

28. *Jōagon-gyō* 長阿含經, I (*Taishō*, I, 121bc). Cf. Vasubandhu, *Abhidhamakośaśāstra* 阿毘達磨俱舍論 (*Taishō*, XXIX, 57c-58a).

29. See Sawada Mizuho, *Jigoku-hen*, 43ff., for references to the *Rokudo jik-kyō* 六度集經 (trans. 251-280), *Hokke hiyu-gyō* 法句比喻經 (trans. 290-306), *Shutcho-gyō* 出曜經 (trans. 350-417), etc.

30. Cf. Edouard Chavannes, *Le T’ai chan*.

31. Cf. Ko Hung 葛洪, *Pao-p’u-tzu* 抱朴子, XVII. See James R. Ware, trans., *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion in the China of A.D. 320, 279*.

25. According to Stith Thompson’s *Motif-Index*, “visit to the other world” is indexed as F. 111.

26. See Matsumura Takeo, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyū*, IV, chap. 5. For a good English summary of various theories on the other world, see C. Ouwehand, *Namazue and their Themes*, 85-96.

27. See Chap. I(2)a, n. 127.



The first two stories date from the seventh century; the remainder, from the eighth. The earliest one is of a journey to the golden mountain in the Prince Shōtoku legend mentioned above.<sup>32</sup> In the second story the other world lies beyond a river and is called "the land in the southern direction" 圖南國, or "a strange wonder land" (I.30). It owes its origin to the *Chuang-tzu* 莊子, a Taoist classic, in which the Southern Ocean or "the Pool of Heaven" 天池, a Chinese mythological resort of deities, is known as the destination of the flight of the mythical bird, *p'eng* 鵬.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, we may conclude that early stories give the idea of the other world as a distant land, whether in the mountains or beyond the waters, although hell and Yama, the lord of the dead, are also included in the second story.

The Buddhist tradition combined the southern paradise, Kannon's land, with an oceanic image of the other world. In India it is called Mt. Potalaka (Ch. Po-t'o-lo shan; Jap. Fudarakusan 補陀落山), a legendary mountain on the southern coast of India or an island in the southern ocean, where Avalokiteśvara resides and protects navigators.<sup>34</sup> Although the *Nihon ryōiki* does not refer to this land, which became a focus for devotion during the Heian period, the second story discussed above shows a possible link with such a development. The ancient Japanese idea of the other world beyond the sea is filled with Taoist and Buddhist images and symbols.

In the later stories in which hell is a major feature of the other world, the image of a distant land is stronger than that of an underground land. Water often separates the land of the living from that of the dead. One can reach the other world only by crossing a bridge (I.30) or fording a river, guided by messengers from the lord of the dead.<sup>35</sup>

Ahead of us there was a deep river; the water being as black as ink, did not run but stood still. A good-sized young branch was placed in the middle of the stream, but it was not long enough to reach both sides of the river. The messenger said to me, "Follow me into the stream and ford it by following in my footsteps." Thus he guided me across [III.9].

32. See Chap. I(2)c.

33. *Chuang-tzu*, I(1). See James Legge, trans., *The Text of Taoism* (SBE, XXXIX, 164).

34. This belief originated with the chapter on Kannon of the *Hoke-kyō* (*Myōhōrenge-kyō*, XXV) (*Taishō*, IX, 56c); Kern, trans., *Saddharma* (XXIV, 406-407); Katō, trans., *Myōhōrenge-kyō* (XXV, 404); and *Keron-gyō* (*Taishō*, X, 366c).

35. These stories suggest a possible relation to the symbols in the Iranian tradition, that is, Cinvat Bridge, Bridge of Requiter, which leads to heaven or hell, and which the dead have to cross. However, in the *Nihon ryōiki* the other world is not differentiated into two parts. See R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 302-308.

This crossing may symbolize a rite of passage from one world to the other. Purification by ablution was known to the Japanese from early times. A good illustration is found in the story of the primordial kami couple: Izanagi 伊邪那岐 followed his deceased consort Izanami 伊邪那美 to Yomi no kuni, the dark land of defilement; on his return from the land of the dead, he purified himself in the river and gave birth to several kami, including Amaterasu Ōmikami.<sup>36</sup> The river of death became the river of life.

Izanagi, as we see, could freely visit the other world, although there were certain prohibitions and rites to which he had to subscribe. Similarly, one story of the *Nihon ryōiki* tells of a prohibition against eating food cooked in the land of the dead, violation of which prevents one's return to the world of the living (II.7).<sup>37</sup> After the age of kami, only folk heroes, ascetics, or shamans, who practiced austerities, could attain such power, which is symbolized by a jewel or treasure obtained through a visit to the other world.<sup>38</sup> They came back to the world to help people by means of the power which they had gained.<sup>39</sup> Various experiences through which one discovered the mystery of the world were symbolically expressed as visits to the other worlds, whereby the hero might encounter the divine, the Buddha, or spirits.

A similar form is found in stories which tell how a bodhisattva, instead of entering nirvana, returns to this world to work for the universal salvation of all sentient beings. Mahayana Buddhism shifted the emphasis from the goal of personal liberation to the process of bringing liberation for all. The bodhisattva ideal, expressed in such a form, was actualized by Buddhist monks and ascetics, who entered the mountains in pursuit of mystical experiences and then returned to their villages and temples to guide their fellow beings. In other words, the traditional cosmology provided a frame of reference for the bodhisattva ideal which had been actualized in the traditional practice of entering the mountains for retreats.

The *Hoke-kyō* gives a scriptural basis for such practices carried out in remote areas and in the mountains. The following is from Maitreya's discourse with Mañjuśrī, explaining Buddha's miraculous signs:

36. *Kojiki*, I (NKBT, I, 68-73). See Philippi, trans., *Kojiki*, 61-70.

37. For a detailed analysis, see Matsumura, *Nihon shinnwa*, II, 427-439.

38. Skt. *mañi*, which has the power to protect man from disaster and misfortune; Buddhist tradition says that Śākyamuni's relics were transformed into jewels. In China jade corresponds to *mañi*. (See Berthold Laufer, *Jade*.) Jade symbolizes sovereign power, immortality, cosmic deities, etc.

39. See Maeda Egaku, "Ryokō no tochū tasekai ni sōgū suru monogatari kō," *IBK*, VI (No. 1, January 1958), 196-200; expanded in "Indo Bukkyō ni arawareta tasekai hōmontar: no seikaku," *Bungaku ni okeru higan hyōshō no kenkyū*, ed. by Ueda Yoshifumi and others.



"I see also many monks in the mountains and woods leading rigorous lives as if they are protecting a bright jewel."<sup>40</sup> The *Nihon ryōiki* contains two stories of monks who entered the mountains, recited the *Hoke-kyō* and eventually died there. The fact that even after death their tongues never ceased the recitation suggests the significance of this scripture for such ascetic monks and lay brothers (III.1).<sup>41</sup>

Throughout Japan there are mountains which have become centers for such religious activities. In Kinai, the central region of Japan in its early history, the Yoshino 吉野 area was a great center for ascetic practices, and Mt. Golden Peak, Kane no take 金峯, was particularly well known (I.28, 31; II.26; III.1, 6). The legend of E no Ozunu says that he disciplined himself in this region and, as a result, gained control of the local spirits and deities. He was later involved in a power struggle with Hitokotonushi no Kami of Mt. Kazuraki 葛城 (木).<sup>42</sup> After he was exiled as a result of Hitokotonushi no Kami's complaints about him to the emperor, he went to Mt. Fuji 富嶽 (士) to practice austerities (I.28). This legend suggests that the practice of austerities in the mountains was known at an early date, and the following story is another example:

In Kamino district in Iyo province there was a mountain called Iwazuchi-yama 石槌山. The name was derived from that of the Kami of Iwazuchi who lived on the mountain. It was so high that ordinary persons could not reach the summit. Only men pure in mind and deed could climb up and live there [III.39].

Buddhist ascetics climbed the mountains to make their retreats, and the kami of the mountains were believed to help them. Only special persons could carry out austerities and receive the blessing of the kami.

Encounters between men and the Buddha, local spirits, or other manifestations of divinity in the mountains is a recurrent theme in many religious traditions. As we have seen, Emperor Yūryaku met Hitokotonushi no Kami in the mountains and received a blessing in exchange for his offerings. However, the same kami was bound by E no Ozunu's spell. The legend of Mañjuśrī's descent on Mt. Wu-t'ai played an important role in legitimizing Buddhism in Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan. In these countries, legends were ascribed to some members of the royal family, identifying them as incarnations of bodhisattvas. In each tradition people looked for a mountain in their

40. *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, I (*Taishō*, IX, 4c). 或有諸比丘在於山林中精神持戒猶護明珠。

41. The possible prototype of these stories is the biography of Kumārajīva in the *Kao-seng chuan*, II (*Taishō*, L, 333a), by Hui-ch'iao. When he died and was cremated, only his tongue remained unburned. 即於遺遙圖依外國法以火焚屍薪滅形碎唯舌不灰。

42. See Chap. I (1)d, n. 119.

own land to claim as the center of the cosmos, or the point where the sacred jutted into the world of men.

The *Nihon ryōiki* mentions several mountains famous as retreats for ascetics and suggests that they became centers for religious practices in their particular localities: for example, Mts. Yoshino and Kumano in Kinai 畿内; Mt. Iwazuchi in Shikoku 四國; and Mt. Fuji in Kantō 關東. Each mountain was the symbolic center of the cosmos for those who accepted it as the place where revelations might take place.

There, in that place, the hierophany repeats itself. In this way the place becomes an inexhaustible source of power and sacredness and enables man, simply by entering it, to have a share in the power, to hold communion with the sacredness.<sup>43</sup>

In the Heian period many pilgrims and ascetics were attracted to Mt. Yoshino. Originally it was believed to be the prospective site for Maitreya's descent at the end of the world, and later to be the site for the appearance of Amida and Kannon. There is a list of Buddhist monks who entered the sea and were drowned in their attempt to cross over to Kannon's pure land from the foot of Mt. Nachi 那智山 at Kumano, which was identified as the gate to that pure land.<sup>44</sup>

The Prince Shōtoku legend is a good illustration of the fusion of Taoist and Buddhist symbols. He stands on the peak of the golden mountain and is given a jewel by a monk, Mañjuśrī's incarnation. In ancient China, jade and gold were prominent symbols of power and immortality. The symbolic structure remains unchanged, although the jade may now take the form of a bead in a Buddhist rosary and immortality be interpreted to mean rebirth as a bodhisattva who will save all sentient beings.

The Buddhist cosmology had a great influence on the vague, undifferentiated world view of the Japanese, although new symbols tended to be accepted in the traditional frame of reference. In Japan the fantastic scale of the Hindu-Buddhist cosmos was restricted frequently to the physical boundaries of the Japanese islands. As cosmology is the fundamental and essential ground for Buddhist doctrines in Mahayana Buddhism, these cosmic symbols played a crucial role in the understanding of Buddhism in Japan.

### c. Paradise and Hell

For the Chinese and the Japanese, the most novel ideas in the Buddhist cosmology were those of paradise and hell and of judgment

43. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 368.

44. Hori, *Wagakuni minkan shinkōshi no kenkyū*, II, 231-236.



after death.<sup>45</sup> In the *Nihon ryōiki* a prominent feature of the other world is the golden pavilion which stands at its entrance. This is the palace of King Yama (I.30), where men of good karma are welcomed (II.7, 16). Yama is a deity in early Vedic literature and the first dead person to rule the land of the dead.<sup>46</sup> As life and death meet in him and his palace, he has become a symbol of the beginning and the end of life. In these tales of visits to the other world, King Yama appears to inform the dead person which of the five or six paths of destiny he is to take, depending on the records of the dead person's past karma.<sup>47</sup>

Judgment after death is postulated in many religious traditions. For the Hindu-Buddhist tradition it has the following significance: Yama could never exist apart from karmic retribution, and the sentence given by him is not of his own making. He is not a judge in the common legal sense but simply an administrator of the law of causation.

As one story of the *Nihon ryōiki* depicts him, Yama himself is one of these sentient beings who aspire to enlightenment through faith in the Three Treasures. Yama is said to have sent for a devout lay sister who was famous for reciting the *Hannya shin-gyō*.

Seeing her, the king stood up, made a seat, and spread a mat [for her], saying, "I have heard that you are very good at reciting the *Shin-gyō*. I am longing to hear you, and this is why I have invited you here for a short visit. Will you please recite the scripture? I am listening" [II.19].

Delighted with her recitation, he paid his respects and sent her back to the world. This aspiration of Yama finds a parallel in the story of the Great Kami of Taga, who longed to hear the dharma. Although he was the enshrined guardian of a particular locality, he was also a sentient being seeking his own enlightenment (III.24).<sup>48</sup> This is not a peculiarly Japanese interpretation since we find the following passage in an early Buddhist scripture:

Once upon a time, monks, it occurred to King Yama: "Those that do evil deeds in the world are subjected to a variety of punishments like these. O that I might acquire human status and that a Tathāgata might arise in the world, a perfected one, a fully Self-Awakened One, and that I might wait on that Lord, and that

45. See S.G.F. Brandon, *The Judgement of the Dead: A Historical and Comparative Study*, for a global treatment of this subject.

46. See Alex Wayman, "Studies in Yama and Māra," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, III (No. 1, 1959), 44-72, for a diverse image of Yama presented in his various titles.

47. See Chap. I(2)a.

48. See Alicia Matsumaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation*, for a general discussion of such phenomena.

that Lord might teach me *dhamma*, and that I might understand that Lord's *dhamma*."<sup>49</sup>

It was necessary for Yama or this kami to be born as a human being to work for enlightenment.

The Buddhist tradition says that a man's activity is composed of three aspects, that is, the physical, the verbal, and the mental. Scriptures emphasize that the mind is the basis for all deeds: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, and it is made up of our thought."<sup>50</sup> Kyōkai quotes the following line of the *Nehan-gyō* to the same effect: "All evil deeds originate in wicked minds" (I.29).<sup>51</sup> A passage from the *Daijōbu-ron* 大丈夫論 further expounds the same teaching: "If you offer alms with compassion, the merit will be as great as the earth; but if you offer alms to everyone and it is for your own sake, the reward will be as tiny as a mustard seed" (I.29).<sup>52</sup> There is a constant admonition against good works becoming a mere formality.

A story, probably written as an exposition of a passage of the *Hoke-kyō*, tells how an ignorant man suffered violent death because he deliberately broke a statue made by a child while playing. The pure devotion of the child stands in contrast to the wicked man's intentional violation of dharma (III.29).<sup>53</sup> Faith in the Three Treasures is essential for leading a good life, while particular forms of its expression are subordinate. In the *Nihon ryōiki* the notion that a good life is equal to a long, happy, healthy life, is held by both clergy and laity. Those who had visited the other world lived past the age of ninety (I.5; II.5); eminent monks of virtue lived past the age of seventy or eighty (I.7, 22; II.7; III.30); devout women lived long lives (II.2, 8, 34). Those who confessed their past deeds and accumulated merits were healed of their diseases (I.8; III.11, 12, 34).

On the other hand, people suffer in hell or in the form of an animal because of their evil deeds. Such offenses were those against the

49. *Majjhimanikāya*, 130:186; I. B. Horner, trans., *The Middle Length Sayings*, III, 229-230.

50. *Dhammapada*, I (SBE, X, 3).

51. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XXXV, 12 (*Taishō*, 573c).

52. *Daijōbu-ron* (*Taishō*, XXX, 257b).

53. *Myōhō-enge-kyō*, II (*Taishō*, IX, 8c-9a). See Katō, trans., *Myōhō-enge-kyō*, 57.

Even boys, in their play,  
Who, either with reed, wood or pen,  
Or with finger-nail,  
Have drawn buddhas' images,  
All such ones as these,  
Gradually accumulating merit,  
And perfecting hearts of great pity,  
Have all attained the Buddha-way; . . .



Buddha, dharma, and samgha, and killing, which included not only matricide (I.23, 24; II.3) and patricide (III.4), but the killing of animals (I.16; II.40) and the taking of birds' eggs (II.10). The persecutors of monks and usurpers of the samgha properties are pictured as being most severely punished, which may reflect the longings of monks who lived in the decadent age of dharma.

In spite of some preoccupation with man's rebirth in the realm of hell and in the form of animals, the world view of the *Nihon ryōiki* reflects the optimistic attitude of the ancient Japanese. There is little indication of an existential sense of crisis, but rather lamentation for the decadence of the times. The idea of a sinful self is absent, and, instead, emphasis is placed on efforts to improve. The idea of a pure land was still novel and lacked popular appeal; only eminent monks such as Dōshō (I.22), Shingon (II.2), and Kanki (III.30) are known to have been born in such a land. On the other hand, in the *Ōjōden* series compiled between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, there are biographies of those from all social strata—high and low, clerical and lay—who attained rebirth in the pure land.<sup>54</sup>

Hell in Buddhist tradition has something of the quality of purgatory and is not a place of eternal damnation since Buddha-nature inheres in all living beings. In order to pursue the bodhisattva ideal, rebirth as a human being was preferred to rebirth in the pure land or heavens. Jizō 地藏, the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha, out of his compassion for those who suffer, descends to hell to save them. A story, dated in 768, of Fujiwara no asomi Hirotari 藤原朝臣廣足 identifies Jizō with Yama, a tradition which probably originated with the *Daihōkō jūrin-gyō* 大方廣十輪經.<sup>55</sup> Although Jizō was known in Japan as early as the eighth century, the cult centering on him did not become popular until the late Heian period.<sup>56</sup> With the advent of eschatological ideas, he came to be looked upon as a savior who had vowed not to seek his own salvation until all sentient beings had been saved from the world of samsara.

If the autonomy of the law of karmic retribution is emphasized, there is little need for the intervention of a judge or savior. Since the *Nihon ryōiki* represents various stages of transition, it includes con-

54. See Chap. I(2)d, n. 186.

55. *Taishō*, XIII, No. 410. Translated for the first time in the period 397-439. The new translation done by Hsüan-tsang in 651 is *Daijō daijū Jizō jūrin-gyō* 大乘大集地藏十輪經 (*Ibid.*, No. 411, 684c-685a). 是地藏菩薩作沙門像 現神通力之所變化 或作閻羅王身 或作地獄卒身 或作地獄身。

56. See Takase Shigeo, *Kodai sangaku shinkō no shiteki kōsatsu*, 364-368; Manabe Kōsai, *Jizō-bosatsu no kenkyū*, 16-17.

flicting views. For instance, stories dated in 773 and 774 discuss the three paths: the first path is flat and wide; the second is covered with weeds; the third is narrow and hard to pass through because of thick bushes (III.22, 23). Each seems to lead to hell, and Yama tells the dead person which path to follow based on his past karma. The wide and flat path is reserved for devotees of the *Hoke-kyō* or those who have accumulated merits. The narrow and hard path is for the most wicked. However, in the Buddhist scriptures these three paths are interpreted as leading to rebirth in hell, as an animal or as a hungry ghost. In contrast, the stories in the *Nihon ryōiki* do not provide such an exegesis. "The three paths" was a universally popular motif, which was probably adapted to Buddhist tradition. In hero tales a man who chooses the hardest path will be victorious,<sup>57</sup> but in the Buddhist tradition the order of the paths has been reversed as a consequence of the law of karma. In other words, a doer of good deeds will pass along an easy path, while a doer of evil deeds will travel painfully along a difficult one. There is a striking resemblance with the Zoroastrian image of the paths to the nether world.

(79) And when the soul of the saved passes over that bridge, the breadth of the bridge appears to be one parasang broad. (80) And the soul of the saved passes on accompanied by the blessed Srōsh. (81) And his own good deeds come to meet him in the form of a young girl, . . .<sup>58</sup>

This is the "Bridge of the Requirer" which every man must cross for three days and nights.

In contrast to the well-delineated Iranian or Chinese versions of the other world, the Japanese version in the *Nihon ryōiki* is vague, fragmented, and inconsistent. The Chinese tradition established a bureaucratic system in hell, while the Japanese tradition located hell in a volcano, emphasizing concrete visual imagery.<sup>59</sup> The other world remained essentially homogeneous with this world in spite of its mythical aspects. Another example of this vagueness is found in the notion of time. Indian cosmological thought is full of astronomical units of time duration and numbers. One day and night in hell is said to correspond to a hundred years (III.35); and one day in paradise, to a single year in this world (I.5). Only the Maeda manuscript specifies a "hundred days" in place of the "hundred years" of the other manu-

57. See G. Dumézil, "The Three Last Voyages of Il'ja of Murom," *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade*, ed. by Kitagawa and Long, 153-162, for a general discussion of this motif. It is indexed as N. 122 in Stith Thompson, *Motif Index*.

58. *Mēnōk i Khrat*, trans. and quoted by Zaehner, in *The Teachings of the Magi*, 133-134.

59. Cf. Takase, *Kodai sangaku shinkō*.



scripts, and there is an obvious tendency for this manuscript to minimize the use of such astronomical units (III.35).<sup>60</sup> We may conclude that the Japanese popular imagination incorporated foreign ideas to agree with traditional ones. Although novel ideas had considerable appeal, they were not determinative, and the center of attention remained in the life of this world.

In the *Nihon ryōiki*, however, there is an interpretation of the other world that transcends time and space. One such instance is the story about a wicked man who used to eat birds' eggs. One day a messenger from Yama came to lead him into hell. Villagers saw the man running around in the field as if he were crazy until eventually he died from burns. Kyōkai's note says: "Now we are sure of the existence of hell in this world. We should believe in the law of karmic retribution" (II.10). The passage gives a popular understanding of hell as a mode of existence. Although Kyōkai quotes from the *Zen'aku inga-kyō* "The one who roasts and boils chickens in this life will fall into the Hell of the River of Ashes after death,"<sup>61</sup> he insists on the idea of "hell here and now." Hell exists in this world in this life and not in the other world after death. This interpretation is parallel to the popular understanding that Buddhahood was attainable in the life of this world. Accordingly, the world view of the *Nihon ryōiki* is said to be "this-world centered," and stands in sharp contrast to that of a later period when men longed for rebirth in the pure land because of their conviction that they were living in the degenerate age of dharma.

## (2) MAN AND POWER

### a. What Makes Man Human

In the Buddhist world view not only human beings but all living beings are destined to die and to suffer as a result of their desires. Each being forms a psychic entity intricately connected with all other beings. As shown by Kyōkai, the doctrines of karma and samsara are understood in the following way: "Beasts in the present life might have been our parents in a past life" (I.21). Therefore, every act, whether good or bad, will leave its effect on the community of all beings as well as on the actor. For this reason many Buddhist treatises have the same ending as the three prefaces in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

60. See Koizumi Michi, "Ryōiki no shohon o megutte," *Kuntengo to kinten shiryō*, No. 34 (December 1966), 18-38. Another case is found in the size of Kṣitigarbha's finger (III.9). Although the other manuscripts have "about ten yards around," the Maeda manuscript specifies "about five feet around."

61. *Zen'aku inga-kyō* (Taishō, LXXXV, 1381).

The deep significance of the three karmas as taught by Buddha, I have thus completed elucidating in accord with the Dharma and logic:

By dint of this merit I pray to deliver all sentient beings  
And to make them soon attain perfect enlightenment.<sup>62</sup>

This passage expresses the author's sincere wish to offer his merit for the deliverance of his fellow beings. "Merit" (Skt. *punya*) is the motive force toward enlightenment, but the realization of interdependent relationships among all existences is a positive restraint against the accumulation of merit for oneself alone.

Kyōkai reveals his view of man in a section of his autobiographical material (III.38). Although man is driven by desire, he also possesses potential for enlightenment. Kyōkai believed that some people totally lacked such potential, for in interpreting his first dream, he says: "He does not have any ways to support them" means that those who lack potential are not oriented for enlightenment" (III.38). In the note to a story on a wicked robber who broke a Buddhist statue, he quotes from the *Nehan-gyō*, and adds his comment:

"Those of the *ichisendai* — 闍提 shall perish forever. If you kill even an ant, you will be accused of the sin of killing; you will not, however, be accused of the sin of killing if you kill the *ichisendai*." (Because the *ichisendai* slanders the Three Treasures, fails to preach to all beings, and lacks a sense of gratitude, killing him is not a sin.) [II.22].

*Ichisendai* is a transliteration of a Sanskrit term *icchantika*, which is translated as "culmination of desires" 極欲, "one lacking faith" 信不具足, "one lacking good stock" 斷善根. It designates a man who is driven continuously by his desires and lacks any potential for enlightenment,<sup>63</sup> who commits sins and never repents.

*Ichisendai* was a controversial concept in both Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, for it conflicts with the idea of universal Buddha-nature expounded in the same *Nehan-gyō*.<sup>64</sup> Since the goal of Buddhists is

62. Vasubandhu, *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*, trans. and quoted by D. T. Suzuki, *Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 194. See Yamaguchi Susumu, *Seshin no Jōgō-ron*, 254-256.

63. Skt. *gotra* translated as *shushō* (shūjō) 種性 (姓): potential for enlightenment which leads men to any of the three *yāna*. Buddhist schools differ on the concept of *gotra*; some consider it a priori 本住種性, while the others a posteriori 習所成種性. See Tokiwa Daijō, *Bushō no kenkyū*, for the whole doctrinal development of the Buddha-nature in human beings.

64. See Mizutani Kōshō, "Ichisendai kō," *Bukkyō daigaku kenkyū kiyō*, XL (December 1961), 63-107.



enlightenment, the doctrine of Buddha-nature or *Tathāgatagarbha* is fundamental. The *Hoke-kyō* and *Nehan-gyō*, which influenced Kyōkai more than any other scriptures, are known for the doctrine that Buddha-nature exists in all sentient beings, while both denounce those who slander Mahayana teachings. However, Kyōkai never stressed the central message of the *Nehan-gyō*, that all sentient beings have Buddha-nature; instead, he repeatedly warned against those who committed offenses against the Three Treasures, such as persecutors of monks, usurpers of temple properties, and slanderers of dharma. Kyōkai explicitly says that a man who commits such acts is inferior to an ant. He also says:

Without compassion man is just like a crow. The *Nehan-gyō* says: "Though there is a distinction in respectability between man and animal, they share the fact that they cherish life and take death seriously." [II.10]<sup>65</sup>

Man shares a common destiny of mortality with other living beings, and knowledge of mortality makes him cherish both his own life and that of others. However, he differs from them in that he is able to attain enlightenment. Buddhists often say that it is difficult to obtain birth as a human being and hear dharma.<sup>66</sup> This statement can be understood only in the context of the Buddhist cosmology which presupposes an infinite expanse of time and various modes of existence. If a man fails to make good use of this rare opportunity with gratitude, he is no better than an animal.

Kyōkai expounds this further in a group of tales on the theme of repaying kindness, in which animals and ghosts, having been saved, rescue their benefactors (I.7, 12; II.5, 8, 12, 16; III.27). His note says: "Even an animal does not forget gratitude, and repays an act of kindness. How, then, could a righteous man fail to have a sense of gratitude? (I.7) The passage echoes a story about a wild fox in which Śākyamuni says that even a wild fox knows gratitude and pays back an act of kindness; how much more, then, should a man feel grateful for having been born as a man and been given an opportunity to hear the preaching of the dharma. In the Buddhist cosmology the notion of *on* based on the realization that there is interdependent relationship among all living beings. *On* became a central principle for guiding

65. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō* (*Taishō*, XII, 484b). 雖復人畜 尊卑差別 寶命畏死 二俱無異。

66. See *Dhammapadam*, 182: "Difficult (to obtain) is the conception of men, difficult is the life of mortals, difficult is the hearing of the true Law, difficult is the birth of the Awakened (the attainment of Buddhahood)." Translated by Max Müller (*SBE*, X, 50).

67. *Zōagen-gyō* 雜阿含經, XLVII (*Taishō*, II, No. 99, 346ab).

conduct in a hierarchical society.<sup>68</sup> The concept of the four kinds of *on* (*shion* 四恩) originated about the sixth century; the *Shōbō nenjo-kyō* 正法念處經 identifies them as indebtedness to mother, father, Tathāgata (Ja. Nyorai),<sup>69</sup> and monks, while the *Shinji kan-gyō* 心地觀經 gives another list, namely, indebtedness to parents, all fellow beings, king, and the Three Treasures.<sup>70</sup> In China, Confucian ethical teaching was combined with the Buddhist notion of *on* (Ch. *en*), and understood as the path of bodhisattvas.<sup>71</sup>

The motif of "the grateful dead" is universal (I.12; III.27), and that of animals, fish, and other creatures repaying indebtedness often occurs in Buddhist scriptures.<sup>72</sup> The *Nihon ryōiki* contains tales of "the grateful crabs (II.8, 12), a tortoise (I.7), fish (II.5), and oysters (II.16)." The tales on crabs became the prototype of the Kaniman-ji 蟹満寺 cycle, legends concerning the foundation of temples or the origin of local names,<sup>73</sup> and gave rise to many versions of folktales about the crab. On the other hand, a crow is used as a symbol of evil, as we have seen in Kyōkai's note quoted above (II.10), and in the story of Shingon (II.2). The popular belief in the crow as an unlucky bird may go back to the earliest period of history.

Śākyamuni taught that misery arises from desire and attachment and concluded that their eradication would lead to enlightenment. Thus, the mind is the focus of discipline in the Buddhist tradition, and enlightenment means a state free from any desire. The Chinese and Japanese interpreted this as an affirmation of life, the goal of which is an orderly restructuring of desire rather than an attempt at its total annihilation. Desire is not only the cause of misery, but also the cause for positive action. Therefore, lay life is valued as much as monastic life in Japan, and the *Nihon ryōiki* tales illustrate this wide humanism.

Kyōkai's positive attitude is evident in the way he deals with stories about human passion. He quotes a scriptural passage in the story of a

68. For *on* in the later social context in Japan, see Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 20-21, 70-73, 77-78, and elsewhere, and Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 99-116, although these authors ignored the Buddhist cosmological significance and limited *on* to the social ethical context.

69. *Shōbō nenjo-kyō*, LXI (*Taishō*, XVII, No. 721, 359b). 有四種恩 甚其難報 何等爲四 一者母二者父三者如來 四者說法法師 若有供養此四種人 得無量福。

70. *Daijō honjō shinji kan-gyō* 大乘本生心地觀經, II (*Taishō*, III, No. 159, 297a). 出世恩有其四種 一父母恩 二衆生恩 三國王恩 四三寶恩 如是四恩。

71. See Mibu Taishun, "On the Thought 'kṛtājña' or '知恩' in Buddhism," *IBK*, XIV (No. 2, March 1966), 951-961; Sasaki Kentoku, "Bukkyō no onshisō o kiwamete Jōdomon no soren o yobu," *Umehara Kangaku koki kinen ronbunshū*, 19-47.

72. The *Shōkyō yōihū* which influenced Kyōkai contains one chapter on repaying kindness (*Taishō*, LIV, 67c-70c). See Chap. 1(2)c, n. 154.

73. See Kurosawa Kōzō, "Kaniman-ji engi no genryū to sono seiritsu," *Kokugo to kokubungaku*, No. 535 (September 1968), 14-24.



scripture copier who, driven by lust, had intercourse with a girl while he was at work in a temple and was punished by death. "If you know what the five kinds of desire are, you will not find any pleasure in them. Nor will you remain a slave to them . . . even momentarily!"<sup>74</sup> (III.18). Kyōkai does not necessarily negate desire per se; he negates the desire that drives man to oppose the Three Treasures. In other words, he is against any desire which prevents man from accepting dharma. One story tells of a lay brother who lusted after the statue of a female deity<sup>75</sup> until the deity responded to him because of his single-mindedness (II.13). Kyōkai does not condemn him for his lust, but simply remarks, "Indeed we know that profound faith never fails in gaining a response." He does reject another kind of lust, however. A wicked husband violated his wife while she was observing a period of strict discipline for a day and night, and he was punished by death as a consequence of his wicked lust (II.11). In another story a licentious woman who had affairs with many men and deserted her children died suffering from swollen breasts, but after death she asked her children to forgive her (III.16). These acts are called wicked by the author, and those who committed such acts are all punished by death. These offenses are religious rather than moralistic since the fundamental cause lies in the ignorance of dharma.

It is clear that the *Nehan-gyō* influenced Kyōkai's view of man. In spite of his denunciation of *ichisendai*, Kyōkai basically agreed with Saichō in not recognizing any distinction between clergy and laity.<sup>76</sup> In an attempt to unify the conflicting doctrines, the *Nehan-gyō* says that if the *ichisendai* confesses his sin, he will attain the way of Buddha.<sup>77</sup> What makes possible this fundamental change is faith in dharma, which is a turning of the heart to the Three Treasures. More than half of the legends in the *Nihon ryōiki* are about poor helpless people who were saved by Buddha in answer to their single-hearted faith. Even men driven by desire are accepted by Buddha for their great devotion. Notes by the author which explicitly stress the significance of faith are found in twelve stories: one from the first volume (I.17), four from the second (II.6, 13, 15, 28), and seven from the third (III.3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 25, 34). Since the *Nihon ryōiki* is arranged chronologically, this distribution shows that profound faith and utmost devotion (至心) were increasingly emphasized. Katayose says that "utmost

74. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XXII (*Taishō*, XII, 496); *Bonmō-kyō koshakeki* (*Taishō*, XL, 705).

75. *Kichijō-ten*; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 6.

76. Saichō, "Kenkai-ron," *Dengyō Daishi zenshū*, I, 112. See Nakao Toshihiro, "Dengyō Daishi Saichō no ningenkan," *Bukkyō no ningenkan*, ed. by Nihon Bukkyō gakkai, 188-203.

77. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō* (*Taishō*, XII, 425c-426a).

devotion" is a central theme in the Buddhist legends of the *Konjaku monogatarishū*, compiled in the twelfth century, and that it is the forerunner of the rise of the pure land faith which swept Japan during the Kamakura period (1192-1333).<sup>78</sup> As we have seen, however, the *Nihon ryōiki* has already insisted that faith is the basis for salvation, which is available to all beings.

A story is told of two ignorant fishermen who, on a stormy night, were told to collect driftwood by their master. While doing so, they drifted out of port on their broken raft. After repeatedly crying out: "Śākyamuni Buddha, please deliver us from this calamity!" they were eventually saved by the Buddha's compassion, repented of their past occupation, and became monks. The author comments as follows:

The sea being full of danger, it was owing to the power of Shakan-yorai and the deep faith of those who drifted on the sea that they could survive the peril [III.25].

This story illustrates a typical pattern of conversion in the *Nihon ryōiki*: men come to repent of their past karma in their experience of peril, illness, misery, or rescue, and thereafter they become devout followers of Buddha. As soon as faith arises in their hearts, they are saved. Repentance of past karma leads to the confession of sins in the present as well as to the making of a vow for the future. The seeds of faith are sown in man, but because of ignorance some men fail to discover and cultivate them.

Kyōkai's view of man is also substantiated in the way he treats people of noble birth. As we have seen, he accepted the traditions of the court histories, such as the *Nihon shoki* and *Shoku Nihongi*, but he tried to interpret history from the Buddhist view of the law of karmic causality. A high status at birth indicated, for him, merit accumulated in previous lives. There is a story of two virtuous monks who were born as princes as a consequence of their past karma (III.39). This does not mean that highborn men were infallible or free from evil; rather, there were emperors and princes who erred because they were too proud, inconsiderate, or passionate. For instance, Prince Nagaya 長屋王 perished because he insulted some monks (II.1); Prince Uji 宇遲王 was punished by death because he persecuted a Buddhist mendicant (II.35); Empress Jitō was admonished by her loyal minister for being inconsiderate of her subjects (I.25). Above all, Kyōkai describes the love affair between Empress Shōtoku (Kōken) and the Buddhist monk Dōkyō more frankly than any court chronicle ever dared to do (III.38). Kyōkai does not state his opinion directly, but records the popular

78. Katayose, *Konjaku monogatarishū-ron*, Part I, Chap. 2.



satirical songs about the empress and the monk that were sung on the streets at that time. Although the empress was noted in other writings as a great patron of Buddhism, this fact is never mentioned in the *Nihon ryōiki*, and little restraint is shown in describing the sexual indiscretion of the empress. It is important to remember that Kyōkai compiled the *Nihon ryōiki* in the early Heian period when the government was trying to break its close ties with Buddhist institutions in Nara, for which the empress was partially responsible. However, this realism may also be the natural outcome of the Buddhist emphasis upon seeing the world as it really is.

In Indian history, the Brahmans held the highest place in the caste structure, and the ruler had to seek their sanction and support. The idea of *cakravartin* (*tenrin jōō* 轉輪聖王), a universal king who turns the wheel of the land, developed among the Buddhists as a result of the universality of their teachings.<sup>79</sup> The *cakravartin* is an ideal king who protects all sentient beings by ruling the world on the sole basis of the dharma as revealed by Śākyamuni. Early Buddhist scriptures present him as the best of all men; later ones mythologize and emphasize his superhuman character. This idea of *cakravartin* was readily accepted outside of India, where rulers were viewed as cosmic figures or mediators between the divine and human realms. Since Buddhism was introduced to those lands mainly on the initiative of the rulers, they were receptive to the idea of *cakravartin* and identified themselves with the ideal universal king.

In Japanese history, actual political power has customarily been exercised by influential court nobles and later by a growing warrior class, rather than by the emperor. The Japanese emperor traditionally was more a symbol of the unity of the people than an active political ruler. The Confucian image of the sage emperor and probably the Buddhist idea of *cakravartin* were adopted when the court started compiling the earliest histories, and this gave Kyōkai an impressive precedent. In his preface he looks back at Japanese history and says:

There are many examples of piety in the imperial line. For instance, it is said that there was an emperor who climbed a hill to survey his domain, had compassion for the people, and thereafter contented himself with a palace that had a leaky roof. Again, there was a prince who was innately prudent and foresighted, able to listen to ten men addressing him at the same time without

79. See Fujita Kōtatsu, "Tenrin jōō ni tsuite," in *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronshū*, 145-156. For a general treatment of Indian kingship see J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View* (reprint from *Numen*, III, IV).

missing a single word. . . . Another emperor made great vows and, as an act of devotion, built a statue of Buddha. Heaven aided his vows, and the earth opened its treasure house to offer gold [I.Preface].

This passage is based on the accounts in the *Nihon shoki* concerning Emperor Nintoku, Prince Shōtoku, and Emperor Shōmu. These men are venerated not because of their hereditary status but because of their deeds of compassion and faith as illustrated in their legends.

Prince Shōtoku and Emperor Shōmu are regarded as incarnations of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (I.5), who came to Japan to propagate the Buddhist teachings. Kyōkai shows great veneration for Emperor Saga in whose reign he probably concluded the writing of the *Nihon ryōiki*. Emperor Saga was a great patron of learning and of the new Buddhist schools of Tendai and Shingon. In the *Nihon ryōiki* Emperor Saga is described as an incarnation of Dhyāna Master Jakusen 寂仙, and, therefore, a sage emperor. Kyōkai argues for the merits of Emperor Saga as a sage emperor. Those who favored Emperor Saga said that he was a sage emperor because he had abolished capital punishment and had ruled the state with benevolence. Those who were against him said that he was not compassionate because he enjoyed hunting, and he was not virtuous enough to maintain the harmony of the universe and prevent natural calamities from descending on the people. Kyōkai says in reply to the latter:

Their charge, however, is not right. Everything in the country he reigns over belongs to him, and we cannot claim as our own even a piece of earth the size of a needle point. All are at the will of the emperor. How could we accuse him of such things? Even in the reign of the sage emperors Yao and Shun, there were also droughts and plagues. So we should refrain from such abuse [III.39].

In Kyōkai's defense of Emperor Saga we hear the echoes of the ideology of universal sovereignty found in the Chinese classics. Some Buddhist scriptures reveal similar ideas; the *Shinji kan-gyō* states:

Mountain, river, earth of the land,  
Reaching all the way to the ocean,  
Belong to the Lord;  
For in fortune and virtue he excels all others.<sup>80</sup>

80. *Shinji kan-gyō*, II (*Taishō*, III, 297c). 於其國界山河大地盡大海際屬于國王一人福德勝過一切衆生福故。 Cf. Matsunaga Yūkei, "Gokoku shisō no kigen," *IBK*, XV (No. 1, December 1966), 69-78; Kanaoka Shūyū, "Konkōmyō-kyō no teiō-kan to sono Shina-Nihon-teki juyō," *Bukkyō shigaku*, VI (No. 4, October 1957), 21-32.



The monarchy being a divine institution, passive obedience on the part of the people is enjoined. Buddhist rulers govern the state with the altruistic love of bodhisattvas, and the people should respond with obedience and loyalty. The Buddhist idea of dependent origination is applied to the social hierarchy in this case, and the sense of gratitude, particularly toward a ruler, is emphasized.

The significance of the emperor in the Japanese tradition rests on the notions that there is temporal continuity of an unbroken line of imperial rule from ancestors in the remote past to descendants in the future and that there is a cosmic unity of heaven, earth, and man. Kyōkai's attempts to reconcile such fundamental notions about his own tradition with Buddhist universalistic ideas met with only limited success. One difficulty in delineating his view of man is due to conflicting materials present in the Buddhist scriptures, which had been written at different times and places. The primary difficulty, however, is that his participation in a social order based on such deeply rooted hierarchical principles limited his claims for the universal dharma.

b. Woman as a Cosmic Symbol

During the one hundred and seventy-seven years of the Asuka and Nara periods, roughly the years covered by the *Nihon ryōiki*, six empresses reigned for a total of seventy-two years.<sup>81</sup> They were all members of the imperial family, and one reason for their selection was the difficulty of deciding on a male ruler. Female rulers in the sixth and seventh centuries were empress dowagers. In the eighth century, after the establishment of the Chinese legal system, women became empresses as a result of the principle of parent-child succession that replaced the traditional principle of succession from brother to brother. Several theories have been advanced for the large number of women rulers. Orikuchi Shinobu, a contemporary Japanese classicist, stresses the shamanistic role of the empress on the presupposition that the ancient tribal rule was carried out through the collaboration of the male chieftain and a female shaman.<sup>82</sup> His theory does not hold

81.

Empress	Reign	Empress	Reign
Suiko	593-628	Genmyō	708-714
Kōgyoku	642-644	Genshō	715-723
Saimei (Kōgyoku)	653-661	Kōken	749-757
Jitō	687-696	Shōtoku (Kōken)	764-770

Parenttheses indicate rule for a second period.

82. Orikuchi, "Nyōtei-kō," *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū*, XX, 1-23.

up in the case of an empress dowager succeeding her deceased husband because a female shaman such as Amaterasu Ōmikami<sup>83</sup> and Himiko 卑彌呼<sup>84</sup> was a virgin of the tribe and not a chieftain's wife with children.

Inoue Mitsusada makes a clear distinction between female rulers of the sixth and seventh centuries and those of the eighth century and rejects Orikuchi's theory as an excessively mythological interpretation. However, he does not deny the influence of a mythical, shamanistic female ruler even as late as the Nara period. According to Inoue, the frequent appearance of female rulers in that age is not an isolated phenomenon at court but an indication of the persistence of a matrilineal tradition that had existed before the Taika Reform (645) and was patterned on the Chinese patrilineal tradition. Although family registries dating from 702 show that the heads of families were usually males, it is assumed that the early tradition was still alive in the practice of using the mother's surname in naming the child during the Nara period and even in the Heian period.<sup>85</sup>

The stories of the *Nihon ryōiki* describe a rich diversity of women, both high and low, rich and poor, lay and clerical. Thirty tales out of one hundred and sixteen feature heroines, and women appear in in another ten. Nuns appear in six stories (I.35; II.2, 17, 19; III.19, 34), and the remainder are devoted to lay women. As mentioned above, the legal system of the society was patrilineal, but social convention betrayed the persistence of the matrilineal tradition. A typical family of a freeman consisted of a dozen members: husband and wife, children, close relatives, and servants. After marriage a wife usually lived in her husband's family (I.2; II.27; III.4). On the other hand, going to the wife's home for courtship and marriage was also in practice (I.31; II.33, 34). Supporting parents was an established practice, and failure to do so brought ethical condemnation (I.23, 24). In spite of such a patrilineal society, stories about parent-child relationships stress the maternal ties in all but three instances (I.9, 10, 15).

83. The sun goddess and mythological ancestor of the imperial family whose name literally means Heaven-shining-great-deity. According to Naoki Kōjirō, Amaterasu was probably a local deity of Ise or a priestess of the sun-god enshrined at Ise. The Grand Shrine of Ise originated in the latter part of the fifth century, and the close tie with the imperial family was established probably in the reign of Emperor Kinmei in the early sixth century. See his *Nihon kodai no shizoku to tennō*, 241-268.

84. The *Wei chih* 魏志 compiled about 297 A.D. gives passages on Wa 倭 (Japan), and refers to Himiko (or Pimiko) as its ruler. "She occupied herself with magic and sorcery bewitching the people. Though mature in age, she remained unmarried. She had a younger brother who assisted her in ruling the country . . ." See R. Tsunoda and L. C. Goodrich, *Japan in Chinese Dynastic Histories*, 8-16.

85. Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon Kodai*, 223-253. See III.16, 39. Cf. *Kojiki*, II (NKBT, 1, 145).



Buddhism introduced in its world view the notion of the equality of all beings before dharma. Śākyamuni's teachings which challenged social discrimination and the caste-oriented society, appealed to women as well as to lower-caste people in India. Equality was realized within the samgha in which discussions and decisions were made in the council of all members. However, some qualifications were made on the status of woman in the samgha. In spite of the fact that early Pāli scriptures include biographies of eminent nuns, as well as monks who attained enlightenment,<sup>86</sup> other scriptures disparage women and stress their inferior ability to practice the disciplines that lead to enlightenment. A tradition has it that Śākyamuni consented to the admission of women to the samgha as long as the regulations pertaining to them were stricter than those for monks.<sup>87</sup> He is credited with saying that the admission of woman to the samgha would shorten the thousand years of Buddhism's golden age by five hundred years.<sup>88</sup> Although there are many reasons to doubt the historicity of these words ascribed to Śākyamuni, the existence of such a tradition indicates that there was a conflict between Śākyamuni's teachings and the traditional Hindu world view.

In Vedic India, women had not only the right of offering sacrifices in their own names but also that of composing hymns.<sup>89</sup> Later, in the Brahmanical period, women lost freedom in religious practices as well as in other social activities. Women were expected to live in complete subservience to their parents in childhood, to their husbands after marriage, and to their sons after the death of their spouses.<sup>90</sup> Such discrimination may be explained in various ways: women's suffering in childbirth was interpreted as a result of evil deeds in past lives; the path to the enlightenment which Śākyamuni had preached was thought to be more suitable for men; women were considered to be more emotional than men, and, therefore, to have more difficulty in reaching enlightenment. No matter what the reasons, the traditional low view of woman gained prominence in later Buddhist literature.

In the Mahayana tradition, the *Hoke-kyō*, *Nehan-gyō*, and *Muryōju-kyō* 無量壽經 are famous for their message of salvation for women. However, in these scriptures women gain enlightenment only after

they have changed sex and become men. The *Hoke-kyō* contains a story about an eight-year old daughter of King Nāga who was enlightened. She was so intelligent that she could acquire in one moment a thousand meditations and proofs of the essence of dharma. Śāriputra, Śākyamuni's disciple, told her that there was no example of a woman having reached Buddhahood because a woman cannot attain any of the five ranks: Brahmā, Indra, the Guardians of the Four Quarters, *cakravartin* (universal Buddhist king), or bodhisattva. She miraculously transformed herself from female to male, thereupon manifesting herself as a bodhisattva, and went to the pure land.<sup>91</sup> In the same manner, the *Nehan-gyō* narrates that two thousand billion women and female deities transformed their female bodies into male bodies and attained arhatship.<sup>92</sup> The same view is expressed in the scriptures of the pure land school, in which the pure land is depicted as a land without any women. Amida vowed that he would not attain enlightenment if women should fail to turn their thoughts toward attaining enlightenment and to despise their female nature, and [they should] be born again as women after having heard his name.<sup>93</sup> There is even a scripture written specifically on the transformation of women into men.<sup>94</sup> Change of sex is accomplished by meditation, Amida's vow, or recitation of dharani.

Kyōkai learned the Buddhist teachings through these scriptures, but he did not accept the view of woman contained in them. The women in the *Nihon ryōiki* convey a quite different impression. Generally Kyōkai not only depicts women as devout and compassionate, even capable of attaining enlightenment, but he also alters the meaning of the scriptural passages to fit his own purposes. For instance, in a story of a poor mother with nine children, a bodhisattva comes to their rescue in response to the mother's faith (II.42). In the note, Kyōkai gives a quotation from the *Nehan-gyō*: "By loving the child the mother is reborn into Brahmā's heaven." This quotation is a modified version of the following passage: "Although women are innately inferior and worse [than men], they may be born in heaven as a consequence of their motherly love."<sup>95</sup> Obviously this scriptural

86. *Therīgāthā*. See *Psalm: of the Early Buddhists: 1. Psalm of the Sisters*, trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

87. See Hirakawa Akira, *Ritsuzō no kenkyū*, 493. A certain Vinaya text gives two hundred and fifty precepts for a full-fledged monk and three hundred and forty-eight precepts for a full-fledged nun.

88. *Cullavagga*, X, 1 (SBE, XX, 320-326).

89. Clarisse Bader, *Women in Ancient India*, trans. by Mary E. R. Martin, 9.

90. See *The Laws of Manu*, V, 148 (SBE, XXV, 195).

91. *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, XI (Taishō, IX, 35bc). 當時集會皆見龍女忽然之間變成男子具菩薩行。See Katō, trans., *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, 258-260.

92. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XL (Taishō, XII, 603c). 入女天女二萬億人現轉女身得男子身須跋陀羅得阿羅漢果。

93. *Muryōju-kyō*, I (Taishō, XII, 268c). Cf. Max Müller, trans., *The Larger Sūkhāvatīvyūha*, 19.

94. For example, *Tennyōshin-kyō* 轉女身經 (Taishō, XIV, No. 564).

95. *Daihatsunehan-gyō*, X (Taishō, XII, 425c). See *The Laws of Manu*, V, 147-166 (SBE, XXV, 195-196). Women are promised birth in heaven by means of their loyalty to their husbands and motherly care and love.



passage makes a distinction between male and female concerning the capacity for enlightenment, although there is concern for the salvation of women devotees.

However, such a view of women's nature was unacceptable to the compiler and his contemporaries and it was eliminated. The *Nihon ryōiki*, instead of making negative statements about women, maintains the equality of men and women before dharma. A more explicit statement of such equality is found in the story of a nun of miraculous birth.<sup>96</sup> Though a dwarf and deformed, she was innately intelligent. When two monks bullied her, a divine man came down to punish them. Once a local magistrate invited a provincial preceptor to act as lecturer on a Buddhist scripture, and this nun was seated in the audience.<sup>97</sup>

Seeing her, the lecturer said accusingly, "Who is that nun unscrupulously seated among the monks?" In reply she said, "Buddha promulgated the right teaching out of his great compassion for all sentient beings. Why do you restrain me in particular?" Then she asked a question by quoting a verse from the scripture, and the lecturer could not interpret it. In amazement, all the famous wise men questioned and examined her, but she never failed [III.19].

This story reveals influences of the Indian tradition: in her birth from a ball of hard flesh, in her title of Sari-bosatsu (bodhisattva) 舍利菩薩,<sup>98</sup> and in her lack of female sexual organs. In the *Nihon ryōiki* she is the only woman that is given the title of bodhisattva. Accordingly we interpret her physical lack of gender as the persistence of the Indian tradition in the process of being feminized in Japan and as a stage in the process of transition from male to female. This story serves as a bridge between an early Mahayana trend and a later Tantric trend in which woman plays a central role as a cosmic symbol. There must have been some hesitancy about conferring the title of bodhisattva on a nun. On the other hand, there is nothing new or striking about the nun's statement on the equality of women before

96. She was born out of a ball of hard flesh, a popular Indian theme which is found in a few Buddhist scriptures as well as in the *Mahābhārata*. In the Indian tradition sons are born of such a ball in contrast to the birth of a girl in the *Nihon ryōiki*. See S. C. Nott, ed. *The Mahābhārata*, 54-55.

97. The *Sōni-ryō*, Article 12, says: "A monk may not enter a nunnery and a nun may not enter a monastery, except to be received by an elder, or for a visit on account of death or sickness or for the purpose of religious ceremony, observance, or instruction." See Sansom, "Early Japanese Laws," Part Two, 130.

98. *Sari*, a transliteration of Skt. *śarīra*, means Śākyamuni's relics, which were popularly believed to be the source of miraculous power. Cf. Jean Przyluski, "Le Partage des Reliques du Buddha," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, IV (1935-36), 341-367.

dharma. One Pāli scripture says: "How should the woman's nature hinder us? Whose hearts are firmly set, who ever move with growing knowledge onward in the Path?"<sup>99</sup> The scene closely resembles that of the daughter of King Nāga who showed a miraculous change of sex in the congregation of monks and attained Buddhahood. Kyōkai apparently adapted a portion of the story in the *Hoke-kyō* to put forward the early Japanese view of woman, which is shown in other tales in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

The *Nihon ryōiki* includes several legends which make us hesitate to call it simply a collection of Buddhist legends. They are "non-Buddhist" legends in the sense that they neither express Buddhist ideas nor use Buddhist terms. Among them there is a cycle of legends on the Venerable Dōjō 道場 which drew the attention of Yanagita Kunio, the founder of Japanese folklore studies. The Venerable Dōjō was a monk of Gangō-ji, a state temple in Nara, who was famous for his great physical strength. Since he was a monk, the story about his life might be classified as a Buddhist legend (I.3). However, it seems proper to classify this and several other legends as "non-Buddhist" because they are thematically and structurally related to each other and distinguishable from the main group of stories. They include:

I.2 On Taking a Fox as a Wife and Bringing Forth a Child

3 On a Boy of Great Physical Strength Whose Birth Was Given by the Thunder's Blessing

II.4 On a Contest between Women of Extraordinary Strength

27 On a Woman of Great Strength

These stories are based on the local tradition of Mino and Owari provinces, where they originated and were transmitted. The two heroes and heroines possess great strength, which has been granted them by the thunder. Another story (I.1) may be added to this group; it shares the element of thunder with the legends about the Venerable Dōjō. Yanagita states that these are legends which show a transfer of power from a heavenly deity.<sup>100</sup>

In addition, there are more "non-Buddhist" legends of this type to which Yanagita never refers. They are as follows:

I.25 On a Loyal and Selfless Minister Who Gained Heaven's Sympathy and Was Rewarded by a Miraculous Event

II.33 On a Woman Devoured by an Evil Fiend

41 On a Woman Who Survived the Violation of a Big Snake Owing to the Power of Drugs

99. *Therīgāthā*, 61-62. See *Psalm of the Early Buddhists: 1. Psalm of the Sisters*, trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids, 45-46, 181-182.

100. Yanagita Kunio, *Imōto no chikara* (*Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, IX), 64.



### III.31 On a Woman Who Gave Birth to Stones and Enshrined Them as Kami

As examination of these eight “non-Buddhist” stories shows that five heroines and three heroes are concerned with thunder (I.1, 3, 25). Most of the stories belong to a category in which a transfer of power from a heavenly deity takes place. All of the heroine-centered stories are somehow related to sexual matters; two of them are about inexplicable events (II.33, 41); the remainder are based on the belief in the power given through an extraordinary birth.

One example is the story of a girl in a village in Mino province.

She was over twenty but unmarried, and she became pregnant without any sexual intercourse. At the end of the second month in the spring of the tenth year of the boar . . . she gave birth to two stones after a three-year pregnancy. They measured five inches in diameter. One was blue and white mixed together, while the other was pure blue. They grew year after year [III.31]. Then one local kami possessed a diviner, who announced that the two stones were the children of the kami. Therefore, they were enshrined in the residence of the maiden who had given birth to the stones, and she served them as a priestess. The stones had special significance: they were born of a virgin, they grew as if they were alive, and they were identified as descendants of the kami. It is assumed that the kami who uttered the oracle was the ancestor of the girl’s family, that is, their *ujigami*. Invested with miraculous power as a result of their origin, they were venerated as symbols of the identity of the ancestral kami, as his descendants, and as protectors and enrichers of life in the universe. The transfer of power through birth is based on the importance of the blood tie between kami and man. The symbolism of woman as a mediator of such power helps explain the Japanese phenomenon of female shamans and priestesses. Procreation was viewed as a mysterious process in which, as a result of the union of male and female, woman became the source of life.

Divine marriage is a recurrent theme in Japanese myths. The pattern is for a woman or a man to be betrothed to a deity who comes to them in a disguised form. Such a marriage often ends with the permanent separation of the couple after the birth of a child because of the curiosity of the human spouse.<sup>101</sup> One of the legends about the Venerable Dōjō illustrates this point: A man married a girl whom he

101. *Kojiki*, I (NKBT, 1, 136–147) Hoori no mikoto 火遠理命 and Toyotama hime no mikoto 豊玉毘賣命, a daughter of the marine kami going back home in the form of a crocodile; *ibid.* (NKBT, I, 180–183) Kami of Mt. Miwa 三輪山 and Ikutamayori-hime 活玉依毘賣. See Philippi, trans., *Kojiki*, 150–155, 203–204. Cf. Yanagita, *Imōto no chikara*, 41–62.

had met in the fields, and she bore a son. When she was discovered to be a fox, she was forced to leave her husband’s home. Her son was named after her and possessed the gift of great strength (I.2). All his descendants inherited this extraordinary strength.

Gradually changes in the symbolism of woman took place. After the arrival of Buddhism, women became symbols of Buddha’s boundless compassion, and motherly love was idealized. For instance, there is a story of a man who was sent to the frontier to serve his term of duty in the defense force. He took his mother to the frontier, leaving his wife in charge of the household (II.3). This was contrary to the common practice, exemplified in other stories, of government officials going to the frontier accompanied by their wives and leaving their parents behind (II.20; III.4). Overcome with love for his wife, he tried to kill his mother to obtain permission for a period of mourning so that he could go home to his wife.

When the wicked son stepped forward to cut off his mother’s head, the earth opened to swallow him. At that moment his mother grabbed her falling son by the hair and appealed to Heaven, wailing, “My child is possessed by some spirit and driven to such an evil deed. He is out of his mind. I beseech you to forgive his sin.” In spite of all her efforts to pull him up by the hair, he fell down [II.3].

The author says in the note: “How great the mother’s compassion was! She was so compassionate that she loved an evil son and practiced good on his behalf.”<sup>102</sup>

Motherhood was the major reason for deferring to women, whose status was low in society. Buddhism often teaches the practice of altruistic love in terms of a mother’s love for her child:

As a mother at the risk of her life watches over her own child, her only child, so also let everyone cultivate a boundless (friendly) mind toward all beings.<sup>103</sup>

Unlimited motherly love is embodied in the bodhisattva, who was believed to possess the power to save children destined to die (II.2, 20). A mother’s milk symbolizes her love.

When her dear son contracted a fatal disease and was dying, he said to her, “It will prolong my life if I drink my mother’s milk.”

The mother gave her breast to her son as he had asked. Sucking

102. Boundless motherly love is a universally popular theme. A medieval Neapolitan poem on a mother killed by her son sounds a similar note: “. . . she said: ‘Son, did you hurt yourself?’ and looking at his finger, sighing, she died. . . .” Salvatore de Giacomo, *Poesie*, 112 (trans. by Louis F. Salano).

103. *Suttanipāta*, 148 (SBE, X, 25).



her breast, he lamented, saying, "I am abandoning the sweet milk of my mother and dying!" and breathed his last [II.2].

Even if man is confronted with the reality of life and death, and knows the inescapable destiny out of which Śākyamuni's teachings originate, there still remains some hope and longing for life sustained by love.

However, motherly love needed to be extended and transformed into the universal Buddhist principle which seeks salvation for all living beings. The *Nihon ryōiki* gives several stories on the theme of saving life, two of which are particularly relevant here (II.8, 12). The heroine of each story is a devout maiden who meets a snake about to swallow a toad. Each maiden risks her chastity in exchange for the toad's life, and eventually is saved owing to her faith. It is evident that these tales are Buddhist adaptations of the divine marriage theme. She is an embodiment of the altruistic love of a bodhisattva, which is compassion based on the Buddhist cosmological idea of the interdependence of all sentient beings.

In ancient Japanese tradition, woman had particular importance as a symbol of cosmic power, a role which is exemplified in her procreative function. Buddhism added the ethical significance of motherly love to the symbolism of woman. In China and Japan, Kannon acquired feminine features as the embodiment of great compassion in spite of a reluctance to see the bodhisattva in female form. Women as well as men are potential bodhisattvas in the *Nihon ryōiki*. Kyōkai does not accept the view of women's inferior nature, but insists on the equality of all before dharma.

### c. Ideal Image of Man

As dharma never exists apart from the cosmos, so dharma never exists apart from men, in particular Śākyamuni and his followers. In a third of the legends in the *Nihon ryōiki*, there appear monks of widely varying character: virtuous and corrupt, scholarly and ignorant, officially ordained and self-ordained. The most noteworthy and highly venerated is Gyōgi, who appears in seven legends (I.5; II.2, 7, 8, 12, 29, 30). One legend is particularly informative because it compares Gyōgi with Chikō, who was one of the most learned monks of the Nara period. When we compare the epithets given to the two eminent monks, there are similarities. Of Chikō, it is said: "He was innately intelligent, and no one excelled him in knowledge." On the other hand, it says of Gyōgi: "He was innately intelligent, endowed with inborn wisdom." (II.7). What makes a real difference between the two is the fact that Chikō was interested in doctrinal studies and scholarly

activities while the compassionate Gyōgi was concerned with missionary activities. Therefore, his contemporaries called him a bodhisattva and regarded him as an incarnation of Mañjuśrī (I.5).

The title of bodhisattva is given to four other eminent religious persons: Konsu, the Ascetic 金鷲行者 (II.21); Dhyāna Master Eigō 永興 (III.1); Saru-hijiri 猴聖 (III.19); and Dhyāna Master Jakusen 寂仙 (III.39). These persons were free from attachments to the world, led a disciplined life, engaged in missionary works, and, except for Saru-hijiri, were venerated by the emperors. Their relationship with the emperors reflects the development of the imperial practice of granting the title of bodhisattva (*bosatsu*) to eminent monks, the first record of which is found in 749.<sup>104</sup> The exceptional case of Saru-hijiri leads to a consideration of what *hijiri* means in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

*Hijiri* may be defined as a charismatic leader of lay Buddhist movements in medieval Japan, particularly in the pure land school. Originally the concept of *hijiri* developed not only under Buddhist but also Taoist and Confucian influences.<sup>105</sup> In China, where legendary emperors such as the Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun, or Lao-tzu and Confucius were venerated as sages, Śākyamuni was accepted as another great sage and added to the list. Kyōkai, in compiling the *Nihon ryōiki*, may be seeking to portray Japanese sages under the influence of Chinese hagiography.<sup>106</sup>

The *Nihon ryōiki* identifies only two persons as *hijiri*: one is Saru-hijiri, and the other is Prince Shōtoku. If we compare these two figures with the other monks, it is evident that they are more legendary than historical. As has been pointed out, Saru-hijiri, an extraordinary nun with a deformed body, shows strong influences of the Indian tradition. On the other hand, Prince Shōtoku's legend reveals a Taoist influence in the concept of a "hidden sage." Although a distinction between clergy and laity is not stressed very much in Japan, Prince Shōtoku was a lay Buddhist, and Saru-hijiri was a nun. Obviously the Buddhist and Taoist ideal images of man overlap in the *Nihon ryōiki*, with the Taoist being particularly prominent in the earlier legends. This syncretic tendency took place in China and was transmitted to Japan. According to the Taoist tradition, there are three kinds of *hsien* 仙: heavenly immortals 天仙, earthly immortals 地仙, and disembodied immortals 尸解仙.<sup>107</sup> The beggar and Gangaku (I.4) seem to be

104. *Shoku Nihongi* (Tenpyō shōhō 1:2:2). The title was conferred on Gyōgi.

105. See Hori, "On the Concept of Hijiri (Holy-man)," *Numen*, V (1958), 128-160, 199-232.

106. The influence of Hui-chiao's *Kao-seng chuan* is documented in the *Nihon ryōiki* (see Chap. I(2)b, n. 137), but that of the biographies of Taoist sages probably came indirectly through Chinese Buddhist literature.

107. Ko Hung, *Pao-p'u tzu*, II, 9a. See Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine, Religion*, 47-48.



unembodied immortals, while E no Ozunu (I.28) and a mother of seven children (I.13) seem to be heavenly immortals, for they ascend to heaven. The anecdote of Prince Shōtoku's meeting with a beggar is the most famous, and it is found in several different versions.<sup>108</sup> The difference between the *Nihon shoki* and *Nihon ryōiki* is that the former emphasizes Prince Shōtoku as a saint admired by his contemporaries and the latter depicts the beggar as a saint. In the *Nihon ryōiki*, Prince Shōtoku is admired indirectly because of his ability to recognize saintliness in a beggar.

A sage is said to differ from an ordinary person in this way:

We learn that a sage recognizes a sage, whereas an ordinary man cannot recognize a sage. The ordinary man sees nothing but the outer form of a beggar, while the sage has a penetrating eye able to recognize the hidden essence. It is a miraculous event [I.4].

In the Buddhist tradition the penetrating eye<sup>109</sup> is the faculty that distinguishes the Buddha and bodhisattva from ordinary men. With such an eye, a person can see into the past and the future, as well as the present; they can also see into other people's minds. It is a sign of the ascetic's passage from conditioned existence to a state of deliverance, or from samsara to nirvana. Prince Shōtoku and Gyōgi are prominent instances. On the other hand, there are stories of men who reveal other sorts of miraculous powers. Gigaku 義覺, a Korean monk, used to recite the *Shin-gyō*,<sup>110</sup> and, as a result, he could become visible or invisible at will and move around without any restrictions (I.15).<sup>111</sup> Knowledge of previous existences is one such power, and there is a story of a devotee of the *Hoke-kyō* who was rewarded with such knowledge of his past life (I.18).<sup>112</sup> As a consequence of the penetrating eye, or clairvoyance, many eminent monks knew when they were

108. *Nihon shoki* (Suiko 21:12:1); *Jōgū Shōtoku hōō teisetsu*, *Jōgū Shōtoku taishi-den hoketsuki* (46:11:15); *Shōtoku taishi-den ryaku* (DBZ, 112); *Manyōshū* (III, 415).

109. *Tengen* 天眼 (Skt. *divyacakṣus*). See Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośaśāstra*, IX (*Buddhist Scriptures*, trans. by Conze, 121-133). According to Eliade, these "miraculous powers" are for the most part stereotyped, and occur in all the ascetic and mystical literatures of India. See his *Yoga*, 177-180.

110. *Prjñāpāramitāhṛdayasūtra*, *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts* (SBE, XLIX).

111. The description of various modes of miraculous power occurs in all the *nikāyas*. For example, *Dīghanikāya* (III, 112-113) divides them into two categories, that is, ignoble supernatural power which is concomitant with mental intoxicants and with worldly aims, and the noble supernatural power which is attained only by Buddhist monks. In the former, from being one a man becomes multiform; from being multiform he becomes one; from being visible he becomes invisible; he passes without hindrance to the further side of a wall, or a battlement, or a mountain, as if through air; he travels cross-legged through the sky, like a bird on the wing. In the latter, he is free from desire and attains self-mastery. See *Dialogues of the Buddha*, trans. by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, Part III, 106-107.

112. See *Dialogues of the Buddha*, trans. by Rhys Davids, Part Three, 104-106. Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 180-185.

to die and what their future life would be (I.22; III.20, 39).<sup>113</sup> In spite of the popularity of stories concerning such miraculous powers, possession of them or particularly exhibition of them was regarded in early Buddhism as dangerous for a monk whose goal was nirvana.

In the Japanese religious tradition, no clear-cut distinction can be made between sacred and secular. What is closest to "sacred" is 聖 (*sei*, *shō*, or *hijiri*), but its antonym is 凡, "ordinary," as understood by Kyōkai. "Sacred" means "supreme, preeminent, extraordinary." No discontinuity exists. This is the basis for the doctrine of universal salvation. Each person has the potential to be a bodhisattva, although there are differences in the degrees of achievement, which is by no means predestined. The ideal image of man is not a scholarly and virtuous monk, but one who lives an ordinary life yet reveals an extraordinary quality through such a life. In other words, he is in society and at the same time rises above society. Generally speaking, bodhisattvas are monks noted for their virtuous lives, while *hijiri* is a term applied to those who possess charismatic or miraculous qualities. The person who combined these two is Gyōgi, the most admired figure throughout the *Nihon ryōiki*. He is the embodiment of compassionate love, wherein the two aspects are incorporated.

There is an anecdote of Gyōgi's love for his disciple, Shingon. Out of his love for Gyōgi, Shingon used to say that he would die and go to the pure land with his master, but he died young. Gyōgi, grieving over the death of his disciple who had made such a vow, composed a poem:

Did you not promise me we would die together?

But, alas! You are gone,

Leaving me behind.

Are you a crow, to be such a great liar? [II.2].

This is simply an expression of human love. Gyōgi's grief over his favorite disciple's death shows the depth of his human feeling.

Other legends of Gyōgi, however, stress his extraordinary ability to penetrate into other people's minds and to see things as an extended series of cause and effect from the past into the future. When Chikō came to see Gyōgi after he had abused Gyōgi and had been punished for his inordinate pride, Gyōgi welcomed him with open arms, knowing what had taken place (II.7). In another story "the penetrating eye" is used as a motif whereby Gyōgi accuses a woman in his audience of having smeared her hair with animal oil, for he saw in the oil the act of killing life (II.29). In another story he told a mother with a crying

113. *Buddhist Scriptures*, trans. by Conze, 133.



child to throw it into the river. Naturally the mother's affection prevented her from abandoning the child, and she came back to listen to Gyōgi again, bringing the child with her. He rebuked her and repeated the same words. Finally, when she obeyed Gyōgi and threw the child into the water, she learned that she had not settled all her debts in a previous life and that her former creditor had been born as her child to make her suffer and pay her debts. The telling of this story is a skillful means for preaching karmic retribution. This woman came to hear dharma, but had difficulties in putting her trust in Gyōgi and obeying him; she was pressed to choose between not hearing dharma and making a total commitment. After she chose the latter, she learned how her karma was being worked out in the past, present, and future.

Wisdom and compassion are means for fulfilling the bodhisattva's vow. Wisdom is cultivated by looking at reality, by seeing things as they are. No discontinuity exists between the great mercy of Buddha and human love. What distinguishes them is the degree to which right knowledge sustains love. Ordinary men are conscious only of physical, carnal love as in the case of the mother with the crying child. But a sage's love is based on right knowledge with which he may see events on a macrocosmic scale. Human love is never rejected, but it must be elevated and expanded on the basis of the right understanding of existence.

### (3) MIRACULOUS WORLD

#### a. *Belief in the Spirits of the Dead*

We find two types of miraculous tale in the *Nihon ryōiki*. In one type, a man or his spirit reveals his extraordinary power through miraculous signs; in the other type, the *dharmakāya*, essential body of Buddha,<sup>114</sup> or the Buddha's spirit (*shōryō* 聖靈) works as an agent through such things as Buddha images and scriptural scrolls to cause miraculous signs which bring people lacking in faith to the realization of the eternal presence of *dharmakāya*. According to Kyōkai, these two are not separate, but united in one dharma transcendent and immanent. Let us begin with a discussion of stories of the miraculous power of the spirits of the dead and that of extraordinary men.

114. Dharma-body of Buddha: one aspect of the threefold body of Buddha, namely, *dharmakāya*; *sambhogakāya*, functional aspect of Buddha which appears in Buddhas and bodhisattvas, such as Amida or Kannon; and *nirmāṇakāya*, historical manifestation in Śākyamuni. Cf. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "The Three Bodies of a Buddha," *JRAS* (October 1906), 943-977; Chizen Akanuma, "On the Triple Body of the Buddha," *The Eastern Buddhist*, IV (No. 1, 1922), 1-29.

In the account of the funeral rites we find a great concern with spirits of the dead. There is evidence of the practice of *mogari* 殯, the ancient custom of preserving the corpse for a short period before burial. During this period some spirits of the dead visit the land of the dead and come back to report on what has happened to them. The dead come back to life in three days (I.5, 30; II.19; III.9), five days (III.23), seven days (II.16; III.22, 26), or nine days (II.5, 7). A three-day period<sup>115</sup> seems to have been most common, while longer periods were exceptional and resulted from an imperial decree (I.5) or the dead man's last wish (II.5, 7, 16; III.26). The *Myōhōki*, a collection of Chinese Buddhist legends which influenced the *Nihon ryōiki*, also tells of the dead being revived: four times on the seventh day, two each on the first and third days, and one each on the second, fourth, and fortieth days. The frequency of revivals on the seventh day may reflect the influence of the Chinese custom of holding the service for the dead on the seventh day (II.33), and repeating it thereafter at the end of each seven-day interval until the forty-ninth day (III.37). Buddhism assimilated this practice of the ancestral cult and incorporated it into Buddhist rites.<sup>116</sup>

Buddhists brought the Indian custom of cremation to China, Korea, and Japan. The Chinese resisted this strange custom, and it was largely adopted by Buddhist monks,<sup>117</sup> while in Japan it was adopted by people of high court rank as well as monks. The first Japanese recorded case is that of the Venerable Dōshō (I.22), who died and was cremated in 700. Empress Jitō, cremated in 703, is the first case among members of the imperial household.<sup>118</sup> However, people seemed to be afraid of losing the body through cremation in case the spirit should return to this world. This might happen in the event that death took place prematurely as a result of some error of Yama or his messenger, or if the merit accumulated by the dead man or his family was judged by Yama to be great enough to allow him to return to life again. Some people stipulated in their wills that their bodies not be cremated, providing for the possibility of coming back to life (II.5, 7, 16). There

115. Temporary burial preceding final burial is a universal practice, although the length of the period varies. According to the Zoroastrian tradition, the soul of the dead hovers around the body for three days and nights. See Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, 133.

116. See Takeda Chōshū, *Sosen sūhai*, 214-244.

117. See J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, III, 1391-1417. Since very ancient times, cremation has been odious to the Chinese, for elaborate funeral and burial was esteemed as the highest duty prescribed by filial piety. In spite of the development of Buddhism in China, we find little positive reference to cremation in Chinese documents for nearly a millennium.

118. *Shoku Nihongi*, I (Monmu 4:3:10), Dōshō was cremated; III (Daihō 3:12:17), ex-Empress Jitō was cremated; III (Keiun 4:11:12) Emperor Monmu was cremated.



is a story of a girl who was sent to the land of the dead by the intentional error of Yama's messengers, who had been bribed by another girl destined to die to substitute the former girl for herself. Yama, after discovering the error, told her to go home, but her body had already been cremated (II.22). The same thing happened to a former minister of the state who could not be revived because his body had been cremated (III.36). The taboo that a man born in the year of fire<sup>119</sup> cannot be cremated is recorded in one story (III.20). These cases reveal a belief that, when a man dies, his spirit leaves the body and goes to the land of the dead. A duality of spirit and body is found in such thought.

In contrast, a monistic view is found in the legends of the beggar met by Prince Shōtoku (I.4), Monk Gangaku (I.4), E no Ozunu (I.28), and the mother of seven children (I.13). These four are clearly depicted in terms of the imagery of Taoist saints who attained immortality. In the first story (I.4) the beggar died and was buried while Gangaku died and was cremated, but both were revived and seen alive. These three legends, in spite of their Buddhist coloring, are primarily Taoist. However, this monistic view of man does not appear prominently in the legends of the *Nihon ryōiki*. The Japanese attitude to the Taoist ideal of immortality, similar to the way in which the Japanese accepted the Buddhist teaching of the transience of life, was largely one of sentimental appreciation.<sup>120</sup>

In the Heian period the belief in spirits of the dead grew into a morbid fear of evil and vindictive spirits,<sup>121</sup> but the *Nihon ryōiki* already exhibits such a tendency. It was believed that, after a violent death, often as a result of political intrigue, the spirit would not leave the body but would linger in this world to haunt the living. For example, Emperor Shōmu had the rebellious Prince Nagaya killed and ordered that he be cremated and his ashes thrown into a river. However, his cremated bones were buried in a distant province. The local people ascribed an outbreak of disease to the vindictive spirit of the prince and appealed to the court. Thereupon, the bones were reburied on an island off the coast of Kii, closer to the capital, in order to appease the spirit. According to Kyōkai, the prince incurred his

violent death as a result of his insulting treatment of a mendicant monk. Although the *Shoku Nihongi* gives a different version of the story,<sup>122</sup> it seems clear that even a rebel's spirit deserved a proper burial in a grave (II.1).

There was a belief that the spirit would not leave the bones even after the flesh decayed, or the body was cremated. Therefore, after cremation, bones were collected and buried properly in a grave. The spirit of the dead person existed somewhere in the universe, and, in the case of a violent death, the spirit haunted the living by hovering around the bones, the only remaining portion of the body. Several stories in the *Nihon ryōiki* reveal this belief. The skull, which was regarded as the essential part of the human body, was the place where the spirit resided (I.12; III.27). The complete Buddhist version of this belief is found in the stories in which the strong faith of a dead ascetic remained in the tongue of the skull and made it recite the *Hoke-kyō* (III.1). Belief in the miraculous power of Śākyamuni's relics may be classified in the same group (II.31, 36). That flesh decays but bone does not is an ancient belief which may be traced back as far as the Paleolithic age. In the tradition of hunting peoples, bone represents the core of life; in death man and animals are reduced to bone and reborn from it according to the perpetual cycle of life and death.<sup>123</sup>

A mediator between the dead and the living was the diviner, *kamnagi* 卜者.<sup>124</sup> When a person died, the bereaved family sent for a diviner to ask him to instruct them of the dead person's last wish or of any message from him (II.16; III.39). This is an ancient rite to call back the dead. The diviner also had the role of healer. When "neither doctor nor medicine could cure the disease," diviners were summoned to purify and pray for the sick person (III.5). Doctors were professional physicians who made use of drugs to cure the sick (II.5, 41). They were concentrated in the vicinity of the capital, and the first to be summoned on occasions of illness.<sup>125</sup> However, since sickness was believed to be the result of past evil karma, confession and prayer was a fundamental means of treating the patient's soul and body, particularly if he was seriously ill.

122. *Shoku Nihongi*, X (Tempyō 11:2:13). It says that Prince Nagaya and his spouse were buried at Ikomayama 生駒山, which is situated in the same province as the capital.

123. See Eliade, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries*, 83-84, 169, and *Shamanism*, 162-163, 323-326.

124. Female shamans (巫) who are the mouthpieces of spirits; *kamnagi* probably derived from *kamu* (kami) and *nagi* (pacify). *Shoku Nihongi*, XVIII (Tempyō shōhō 4:8:17) says that seventeen diviners in the capital were arrested and exiled to distant provinces such as Izu, Oki, Tosa.

125. Suzuki Shūji, "Konjaku monogatari shū ni okeru byōsha to chiriyōsha," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 243 (August 1968), 92-105.

119. *Hinoe* (ping 丙), the third of the Ten Stems, referring to the south and fire in the Chinese yin-yang wu-hsing cosmology, and there are many taboos for a person born in this year. See Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, II, 11-16, for the Ten Stems.

120. Cf. Kobayashi Tomoaki, *Mujōkan no bungaku* 無常観の文學. In order to emphasize the Japanese sentimental appreciation of the Buddhist idea of transiency 無常観, the author replaces *kan* 観 (aspect, idea, view) with another *kan* 感 (feeling, sentiment, emotion).

121. Hori, *Folk Religion*, 111-117. *Goryō* 御霊 is an angry spirit. Cf. Thompson, *Folklore*, 257. In his *Motif-Index*, it is classified as E. 413.



These two functions of a diviner were gradually taken over by Buddhist monks who, through ascetic practices, gained the power of "the penetrating eye." Dharani was considered the most effective medium for such purposes. Tajō 多常, (or Tarajō 多羅常), a Korean monk, won the empress' respect for his compassionate acts of healing.

He lived a life of strict discipline in Hōki-yamadera in Takechi district and made it his chief concern to cure diseases. The dying were restored to health by his miraculous works. Whenever he recited formulas for the sick, there was a miraculous event. . . .

This is the fruit of his disciplined life. His fame and compassionate virtue will be praised forever [I.26].

The *Sōni-ryō* prohibited monks and nuns from healing by exorcism or magic, but the healing of the sick by the recitation of Buddhist formulas was permitted.<sup>126</sup> Although the *Sōni-ryō* tried to differentiate between Buddhist healing practices and those of the *Onmyōdō*<sup>127</sup> and of pre-Buddhist origin, on the practical level they fused.<sup>128</sup> Buddhism tended to internalize ancient healing practices and emphasized self-introspection and repentance as a necessary part of the healing process. On the other hand, there were ascetics (*gyōja*) whose only contact with Buddhist discipline was the practice of recitation of the name of a Buddha, mantra, or dharani, and who became religious leaders in villages. Most of them were lay brothers (*ubasoku* 優婆塞) who lived in a village temple or mountain retreat. Some of them were promoted to the status of ordained monk, while others remained as *gyōja*, performing a role similar to that of *kamnagi*, although the former were predominantly male and the latter female.<sup>129</sup>

b. Wonder of the Three Treasures

Let us turn now from the stories about the miraculous power of holy men to the stories of the miraculous power displayed by such objects as scriptures and Buddha images. Among the miraculous tales of the *Nihon ryōiki*, the most prominent are the stories about Kannon and the *Hoke-kyō*. Although devotion to Kannon is based on a chapter of the *Hoke-kyō*,<sup>130</sup> we will discuss separately the Kannon legends and the *Hoke-kyō* legends, partly because the chapter on Kannon was often

126. *Ryō no gige*, "Sōni-ryō," Article 2. See Sansom, "Early Japanese Law," *TASJ*, Second Series, XI, 128.  
127. Japanese reading of *yin-yang tao*; it became popular in Japan through divination and astrology. See Murayama Shūichi, "Jōdai no onmyōdō," in *Kokumin seikatsushi kenkyū*, ed. by Itō Tasaburō, IV, 121-156.  
128. Divination and healing by *kamnagi* were prohibited by the authorities. See *Ruijū sandai-kyaku*, XII (Hōki 11:12:14) and (Daidō 2:9:28).  
129. Cf. Nakayama Tarō, *Nihon fūjo-shi*.  
130. *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, XXV (*Taishō*, IX, 56c-58b); Katō, trans., *Myōhō-renge-kyō*, XXV, 424-415; Kern, trans., *Saddharma*, XXIV, 406-418.

taken as an independent scripture, and partly because there is a distinction between the two groups of legends in the *Nihon ryōiki*.

Among the Buddhas and bodhisattvas found in the *Nihon ryōiki*, Kannon is the most popular and remains a center for devotion by all classes of people. There are seventeen stories on Kannon, six on Miroku 彌勒,<sup>131</sup> three each on Amida,<sup>132</sup> Śākyamuni, and Myōken 妙見;<sup>133</sup> and two each on Kichijōten,<sup>134</sup> and Yakushi 藥師.<sup>135</sup> Their distribution is as follows:<sup>136</sup>

Buddhas and bodhisattvas	Number of tales	Volume	Tale
Kannon	17	I	6, 17, 18, 20, 31
		II	11, 17, 26, 34, 36, 42
		III	3, 7, 12, 13, 14, 30
Miroku	6	II	23, 26
		III	8, 12, 13, 30
Amida	3	I	5, 33
		II	26
Śākyamuni	3	II	28
		III	25, 30
Myōken	3	I	34
		III	5, 32
Kichijōten	2	II	13, 14
Yakushi	2	II	39
		III	11

131. Maitreya, whose future coming is prophesied in Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese scriptures such as the *Dīghanikāya* (iii, 76), *Mahāvastu* (iii, 240), *Hoke-kyō*, *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*, *Miroku geshō-kyō* 彌勒下生經, *Miroku-bosatsu jōshō* 彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, and others. Maitreya resides in the Tuṣita heaven (Tosotsuten) and will descend to earth to teach dharma at the end of the world. The Maitreya cult shows similarities to the Amida cult, but the latter outnumbers the former in China and Japan in terms of those who aspired to birth in the western paradise. See Ienaga Saburō, *Jōdai Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 28-37.  
132. Amitābha (Infinite Light) or Amitāyus (Infinite Life) rose in popularity toward the end end of the Heian period in Japan. The *Hoke-kyō* mentions Amitāyus as one of the sixteen Buddhas and the lord of the western paradise. For the western paradise, see Chap. I(1)a, n. 16. The *Nihon ryōiki* does not refer to any scriptures of the pure land school, although there are indications of the belief in the western paradise.  
133. A bodhisattva who originated with the Chinese folk worship of the North Pole Star, which was believed to control the life of people as well as their fortunes; Buddhist tradition regards the North Pole as the apex of Mt. Meru, a cosmic mountain. In Japan the cult, centering on the figure of Myōken, was celebrated not only at Buddhist temples but also at Shintō shrines. The first evidence of the cult at court is recorded as 785, and the enshrined images resemble those of Kichijōten. See Murayama, "Jōdai no onmyōdō," in *Kokumin seikatsushi*, ed. by Itō, IV, 131-133; Nomura Yōshō, "Kindai ni okeru Myōken shinkō," *Kindai Nihon no Hokke Bukkyō*, ed. by Mochizuki Kankō, 201-246.  
134. See Chap. II(1)a, n. 6.  
135. Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddha of Healing, who resides in the land of pure emerald in the east. See *Yakushi nyōrai hongan-kyō* 藥師如來本願經, *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, XXIII (*Taishō*, IX, 53a-55a).  
136. Buddhas and bodhisattvas referred to only once are omitted.



The great popularity of Kannon rests on the message of the *Kannon-gyō* (the chapter on Kannon of the *Hoke-kyō*), which affirms life in this world, human nature, and the doctrine of universal salvation. It teaches the saving power of Kannon over the seven calamities of fire, water, storm, sword, evil spirits, enemies, and inner evils such as lust, anger, and ignorance.

The stories about the *Hoke-kyō* are distributed as follows:

I. 11, 18, 19, 28

II. 3, 6, 15, 18

III. 1, 6, 9, 10, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38.

Only two stories appear in both lists (I.18; III.13). This is due to the fact that the Kannon cult was centered more around images than scriptures, and devotees simply meditated on Kannon, invoked Kannon by calling the name, or made offerings of lights, flowers, and incense to Kannon. In response to their devotion, Kannon never failed to answer their requests. On the other hand, in the *Hoke-kyō* cult devotees recited or copied the scripture, which required some degree of learning. The concentration of the *Hoke-kyō* stories in the third volume shows their rising popularity toward the end of the Nara and early Heian periods, for the common people did not have access to the scriptures in the early years of Japanese Buddhism, when a limited number of scriptures were available only in Chinese.

Kannon was known to the Japanese not only through the *Hoke-kyō* but also through the scriptures of the pure land school such as the *Muryōju-kyō* and Tantric scriptures such as the *Jūichimen kanzeon shinju-kyō* 十一面觀世音神呪經,<sup>137</sup> and *Senju sengen darani-kyō* 千手千眼陀羅尼經.<sup>138</sup> Over one hundred and thirty Tantric scriptures were transmitted to Japan by eminent monks such as Dōji (d. 700) and Genbō (d. 746) and spread quickly.<sup>139</sup> The Eleven-headed Kannon (Ekādaśamukha Avalokiteśvara 十一面觀音) and the Thousand-armed Kannon (Sahasrabhujasahasrākṣa Avalokiteśvara 千手[千眼]觀音), which became popular with the practice of reciting the relevant dharani, are the embodiment of the cosmic nature of Kannon. Avalokiteśvara was originally a mythological creation of Indian Buddhists; the being was seldom represented as a human, but was invested with supernatural forms. Avalokiteśvara absorbed so many attributes

of Buddha's and bodhisattvas that it became almost an independent cosmic figure in the northern Buddhist countries.<sup>140</sup> Kannon incarnated in thirty-three forms is a mediator of this world and the other world, life and death, and Buddhas and all living beings. Garjin, a famous blind preceptor who came from China to establish the ordination platform at Emperor Shōmu's invitation, was a great devotee of the Thousand-armed Kannon, probably because that Kannon was believed to cure blindness (III.12).<sup>141</sup>

In boundless compassion Kannon is eternally at work to protect and save all sentient beings in this world and an infinite number of other worlds. One tradition explains how the Eleven-headed Kannon came into being by a story: Avalokiteśvara once looked down on the suffering of the world and was so distressed by the sight that his head split into eleven pieces.<sup>142</sup> Female features which characterize Kannon in Japan and Kuan-yin in China may have originated with Kannon's role of savior, and the fusion of these features with the folk belief in mother divinities. In medieval China, many legends about a girl who is identified as an incarnation of the Thousand-armed Kuan-yin illustrate the process of acceptance of Kuan-yin as a young woman.<sup>143</sup> Obviously Tantric Kuan-yins preceded beautiful female Kuan-yins in China. In the *Nihon ryōiki*, three stories are on the Eleven-headed Kannon (II.11; III.3, 30) and Thousand-armed Kannon (II.42; III.12, 14), while one is on the Kannon based on the *Hoke-kyō* (I.18).

The same miraculous qualities are attributed to the *Hoke-kyō*. Its scrolls were believed to be repositories of miraculous power, which worked against those who slandered the scripture or its devotees (III.6, 20, etc.). Copying the *Hoke-kyō* was considered to be an act of great merit, a fact well illustrated in the story of a high official who was sent to hell. Yama tried to offset his offenses with the merit of the 69,384 characters of the *Hoke-kyō* he had copied during his lifetime, but found that the merit was insufficient (III.37). The biographies of the *Ōjōden* series record the accounts of those born in the pure land by reciting or copying the *Hoke-kyō*. The *Hōkke kenki*<sup>144</sup> shows that the devotees of the *Hoke-kyō* were born in Maitreya's heaven or

140. See Paul Mus, "Thousand-armed Kannon: A Mystery or a Problem?" *IBK*, XII (No. 1, January 1964), 438-470.

141. See Kobayashi Taichirō, "Narachō no Senju Kannon," *Bukkyō geijutsu*, XXV (1955), 55-80.

142. L. A. Waddell, "The Indian Buddhist Cult of Avalokita and His Consort Tārā 'the Savioreess,' Illustrated from the Remains in Magadha," *JRAS* (1894), 59-60.

143. Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Kinsei Shina taishū no nyoshin Kannon shinkō," *Yamaguchi hakushi kaneki kinen Indogaku Bukkyōgaku ronsō*, 262-280; Kobayashi Taichirō, "Tōdai no Daihi Kannon," *Bukkyō geijutsu*, XX (1953), 3-27; XXI (1954), 89-109; XXII (1954), 3-28.

144. See Chap. I(2)d, n. 181.

137. *Jūichimen kanzeon shinju-kyō* (Taishō, XX, No. 1070). *Jūichimen kanzeon shinju shin-gyō* (*Ibid.*, No. 1071).

138. *Senju sengen kanzeon bosatsu kōdai emman muge daihishin darani-kyō* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經 (*Ibid.*, No. 1060).

139. See Inaya Yūsen, "Nara jidai mikkyō kyōten to Kūkai," *Mikkyō bunka*, No. 73 (June 1965), 52-59. Genbō of the Hossō School who had studied in China (716-734) made a vow to make a thousand copies of the *Senju sengen darani-kyō*, and achieved it in 743.



Kannon's pure land. Mahayana scriptures state it to be a bodhisattva practice to uphold and propagate dharma. Since the scriptures contain dharma, upholding, reading, expounding, and copying them are effective means for spreading dharma, and, therefore, a bodhisattva practice. The Buddha is said to be present in the scriptures.

The *Hoke-kyō* was influential in the Japanese understanding of Śākyamuni, for it was one of the earliest scriptures in Japan and it had gained great popularity among the people. Prince Shōtoku's commentary on the *Hoke-kyō*, *Hokke gisho* 法華義疏<sup>145</sup> is a good illustration of the appeal which it exercised as early as the sixth century (I.Preface). It emphasizes that faith in the Śākyamuni's teaching is favored above all else, and with faith even karma is destroyed by dharani, although good works are neither excluded nor rejected. Bodhisattvas are ready to help devotees reach Buddhahood. In China as well as Japan, the *Hoke-kyō* cult was gradually overshadowed by the Amida cult, but they share a common emphasis on devotion, although the stress shifted from this world to the hereafter. In the *Hoke-kyō*, Kannon is the counterpart of Amida, the Savior.

Speculation on the nature of Buddha led to the formulation of the doctrine of *trikāya*, the three bodies of Buddha, namely, the dharma-body, enjoyment body, and apparitional body. The *Hoke-kyō* says that Śākyamuni attained enlightenment many ages ago, and he will exist for countless more in the future. Thus his transcendental quality is greatly enhanced, and he is identified with dharma. On the other hand, the *Nehan-gyō* developed the idea of the immanent Buddha-nature within all beings. As stated above, these two scriptures were those most familiar to Kyōkai. Kyōkai interprets many miraculous signs of Buddha images by saying:

The dharma-body Buddha of the ultimate reality has neither flesh nor blood. Why then did it suffer from pain? This took place only to show that dharma exists changeless. It is another miraculous event [II.23].

Why does the dharma-body Buddha reveal miraculous signs? Dharma was understood as the ultimate reality underlying every phenomenon. The dharma-body is not one since it pervades and supports everything; nor is it multiple since it remains identical with itself.<sup>146</sup>

145. *Hokke gisho* (DBZ, 14, 1-130). See Hanayama Shinshō, *Hokke gisho no kenkyū* (Tōyō bunko ronshū, XVIII, 1). Hanayama, an exponent of the traditional theory on its authorship, ascribes it to Prince Shōtoku, while Tsuda Sōkichi challenges this and would shift the date of compilation to the Nara period (*Nihon koten no kenkyū*, II; Tsuda Sōkichi *zenshū*, II, 129-138).

146. Poussin, "The Three Bodies of Buddha," *JRAS* (1907), 956.

Indeed we know that the dharma-body of wisdom exists. This is a miraculous sign to bring the faithless to a realization of this [II.36].

In some stories he explains such miraculous signs as the work of the Buddha's spirit 聖靈 (II.22, 26) or the Buddha's mind 聖心<sup>147</sup> (III.26), which resided in Buddha statues.

It is said that the Buddha statue is not alive, so how could it suffer and be sick? Indeed, we learn that this was the manifestation of the Buddha's mind. Even after the death of Buddha, the dharma-body always exists, eternal and unchangeable [III.28].<sup>148</sup> All beings exist in the dharma and reveal it. Buddha is a major cosmic symbol of the dharma, and Buddha's spirit or mind functions in the cosmos.

When we compare miraculous stories about the spirits of the dead with those about the Buddha's spirit or mind and dharma-body Buddha, we find structural similarities that lead us to think that Kyōkai may have understood the latter as analogous to the former. The dharma-body Buddha is present in scriptures and statues, just as the spirits of the dead reside in bones and elsewhere. In the *Nihon ryōiki* there is no reference to the historical Buddha, and Śākyamuni Buddha is depicted as a savior similar to Amida or Kannon (II.28; III.25). The dharma-body Buddha, transcendent and immanent, became the source of faith for the Japanese who lived far away from India and accepted Buddhism a millennium after Śākyamuni's lifetime.

In the Buddhist tradition, *triratna*, the Three Treasures, is the foundation of salvation, and the Buddhist profession of faith is formulated into the vow of faith in the Three Treasures. As to the understanding of the Three Treasures in Japan, Ienaga has discussed the second article of Prince Shōtoku's Seventeen-Article Constitution, which reads: "Venerate highly the Three Treasures. The Three Treasures are Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha."<sup>149</sup> He points out that the Japanese understanding of the Three Treasures centered around the dharma-body Buddha, which became the basis of Japanese Buddhism as early as the time of Prince Shōtoku.<sup>150</sup> He infers that the second sentence was

147. See W. Liebenthal, "One-mind-dharma — 一心法," *Tsukamoto hakushi shōju kinen Bukkyō shigaku ronshū*, 41-47. According to Seng Chao 僧肇 (374-414), the mind of the Sage, that is, Buddha's mind, is life 靈, which is identified with *prajñā*, and permeates the universe: the Sage is the universal soul, which participates in individual lives, latent and manifest, one and divided. Liebenthal suggests its possible derivation from *dharmakāya*.

148. 雖佛滅後法身常住 may be a modified version of 明雖滅盡燈燄猶存 如來亦爾煩惱雖滅法身常存 in the *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, V (*Taishō*, XII, No. 374, 390a).

149. *Nihon shoki*, XXII (Suiko 12:4:3).

150. Ienaga, *Jōdai Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū*, 26-27.



originally a note of a later commentator, included in the main text by mistake, and that the three components of the Three Treasures were not considered of equal significance.

The *Nihon ryōiki* gives more than a dozen citations of "the Three Treasures" (*sanbō* 三寶), and two of "Buddha, Dharma, Samgha" (*buppōsō* 佛法僧), the latter two being apparently Kyōkai's words since one is found in his comment on the term *ichisendai*<sup>151</sup> and the other in his preface to the third volume. The term "Three Treasures" means the Buddhist teachings as often as it means the embodiment of Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha in Buddha images, scrolls, and monks. Therefore we agree with Ienaga that the Japanese Buddhists had faith in the dharma-body Buddha, and we may add that they have also shown a strong tendency to embody the Three Treasures in specific objects that became symbols of the dharma-body Buddha. This explains why there are miraculous tales concerning holy men, statues, and scrolls in the *Nihon ryōiki*. Through devotion to a particular symbol, devotees have experienced the eternal presence of the dharma-body Buddha revealed in miraculous signs.

From early scriptures we learn that primitive Buddhists did not reject the miraculous, but they held it in low esteem. There are three categories of the miraculous: the mystical wonder, the wonder of manifestation, and the wonder of education.<sup>152</sup> The real wonder is that of education, that is, the wonder of transforming the self, or self-mastery. Monks were not allowed to display miraculous power before the laity.<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, there was a strong tendency to ascribe power to Śākyamuni and his famous disciples out of veneration for them. In the Mahayana tradition in which the power of Śākyamuni and other Buddhas and bodhisattvas is revealed through their compassion in the saving of all sentient beings, such power is manifested in all times and places as a skillful means for guiding men to faith, to the path of enlightenment. Biographies of Buddhist monks have a special chapter on those who were famous for miraculous powers.<sup>154</sup> Signs of miraculous power serve as stimuli for the faithful, as the observance of precepts is considered an aid to the realization of enlightenment.

151. See Chap. II(3)a, n. 114.

152. *Dighanikāya*, I, III, and elsewhere. See *Dialogues of the Buddha*, trans. by Rhys Davids, Part I, 272-284, III, 95-110, and elsewhere. See Chap. II(2)c, n. 111.

153. See *The Vinaya Texts*, trans. by T. W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, III (SBE, XX, 81), *Cullavagga*, V, 8, 2: "You are not, O Bhikkus, to display before the laity the superhuman power of *Idāhi*. Whosoever does so shall be guilty of a *dukkata* (a wrong act)."

154. Hui-chiao's *Kao-seng chuan* has a chapter on *shen-i* 神異 (IX-X), while Tao-hsüan's *Kao-seng chuan* (道宣, 高僧傳) and Pao-ch'ang's *Ming-seng chuan* (寶唱, 名僧傳) have a chapter on *kan-t'ung* 感通.

If miracles are narrowly defined as the intervention of the divine which is designed to suspend or change the law of nature, then wondrous occurrences in the Buddhist tradition are not miracles, but the work of karma (I.26). As a consequence of past karma, man becomes a sage, holy man, bodhisattva, or buddha, and attains self-mastery. To the popular imagination, however, wonders held such appeal that they served as signs to invite men through the gate along the path toward enlightenment.



The Inner Scriptures<sup>1</sup> and Outer Writings<sup>2</sup> initially came to Japan by way of Paekche<sup>3</sup> in two waves: the latter arrived during the reign of Emperor Homuda 譽田,<sup>4</sup> who resided at the Palace of Toyoakira in Karushima 輕嶋豐明宮;<sup>5</sup> the former, during the reign of Emperor Kinmei 欽明,<sup>6</sup> who resided at the palace of Kanazashi in Shikishima 磯城嶋金刺宮.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays, it is fashionable for scholars who study the Outer Writings to slander Buddhist teachings, and for those who read the Inner Scriptures to neglect the Outer Writings. They are foolish and deceive themselves, ignoring the consequences of good and evil deeds.<sup>8</sup> But the wise, who are well versed in both the Inner and Outer traditions, stand in awe and believe in the law of karmic causation.<sup>9</sup>

There are many examples of piety in the imperial line. For instance, it is said that there was an emperor who climbed a hill to survey his domain, had compassion for the people, and thereafter contented himself with a palace that had a leaky roof.<sup>10</sup> Again, there was a prince who was innately prudent and foresighted, able to listen to ten men addressing him at the same time without missing a single word.<sup>11</sup> At the emperor's bidding he lectured on a Mahayana scripture when he was twenty-five years old, and his commentaries on Buddhist scriptures have been handed down for posterity. Another emperor made

1. 內經 *naikyō*; Buddhist scriptures.

2. 外書 *gesho*; non-Buddhist writings, that is, Chinese classics.

3. 百濟 Kudara (traditionally 18 B.C.–663 A.D.); one of the Korean Kingdoms which unified the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula in the beginning of the fourth century and served as the chief route for the introduction of continental culture to Japan.

4. (traditional reign, 270–310) posthumous name Ōjin 應神. Homuda might be a local name. About 400 the King of Paekche, whose country had been aided by the Japanese expedition against Koguryō 高句麗 in 291, sent scholars (阿直岐, 王仁) and Chinese classics to the Japanese court. See *Nihon shoki* (Ōjin 15:8:6; 16:2); Aston, "Nihongi," I, 262–263.

5. Located at present Ōkaru, Kashiwara-shi, Nara-ken 奈良縣橿原市大和.

6. (traditional reign, 539–571) According to the *Nihon shoki*, the introduction of Buddhism took place in 552, when King Syōng-myōng 聖明王 of Paekche presented to Emperor Kinmei a bronze statue of Śākyamuni Buddha, several flags and canopies, and a number of scriptures. See Chap. I(1)b, n. 37; see also I.5.

7. Located at present Kanaya, Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken 奈良縣櫻井市金屋.

8. 罪福 *zaifuku*; evil deeds which lead to penalties and good deeds which lead to rewards.

9. 因果 *inga*; cause and effect, that is, the law of karmic causation. It is juxtaposed with *zaifuku* in the preceding sentence.

10. Refers to Emperor Nintoku 仁德 (traditionally, 290–399); depicted in the Confucian image of an ideal king in the *Kojiki* (III.110) and *Nihon shoki* (XI, Nintoku 4:2:6; 7:4:1).

11. Refers to Prince Shōtoku. See I.4, 5.

12. The *Sangyō gisho* 三經義疏; commentaries on three Buddhist scriptures, that is, *Hōke-kyō* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*), *Yuima-kyō* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*), *Shōman-gyō* (*Śrīmālādevīsīmhanādasūtra*), which are traditionally ascribed to Prince Shōtoku (*Taishō*, LXI, Nos. 2185–2187). See Chap. II(3)b, n. 145.



great vows<sup>13</sup> and, as an act of devotion, built a statue of Buddha. Heaven aided his vows, and the earth opened its treasure house to offer gold.<sup>14</sup>

There were also eminent monks whose virtues equaled those in the ten stages<sup>15</sup> and whose path went beyond the two vehicles.<sup>16</sup> They brought the light of wisdom to dark corners, rescued the drowning with the boat of compassion, practiced religious austerities, and were known even in distant lands. As to those of our own age who are enlightened, we cannot yet know how great their merits are.

Now I, Kyōkai, monk<sup>17</sup> of Yakushi-ji<sup>18</sup> in Nara, see the world closely. There are men who are able, but they are selfishly motivated. Their desire for gain is stronger than a magnet that can pull a mountain of iron; their lust for the possessions of others and their tightfisted hold

on their own goods are greater than that of a grinder<sup>19</sup> which relentlessly squeezes even the husk of a single millet seed. Some men defraud temples and are reborn as calves to toil and repay the debts of their former lives;<sup>20</sup> some speak ill of Buddhist teachings and monks and meet with calamity in this present life;<sup>21</sup> some seek the path [of Buddha] by leading a disciplined life of practice and are rewarded in this life;<sup>22</sup> some practice good with a profound faith and are blissful.<sup>23</sup>

Good and evil deeds cause karmic retribution as a figure causes its shadow, and suffering and pleasure follow such deeds as an echo follows a sound in the valley.<sup>24</sup> Those who witness such experiences marvel at them and forget they are real happenings in the world. The penitent withdraws to hide himself, for he burns with shame at once. Were the fact of karmic retribution not known, how could we rectify wickedness and establish righteousness? And how would it be possible to make men mend their wicked minds and practice the path of virtue without demonstrating the law of karmic causation?

In China,<sup>25</sup> the *Myōhōki* (Record of Invisible Work of Karmic Retribution)<sup>26</sup> was compiled, and, during the great T'ang dynasty, the *Hannya kenki* (A Collection of Miraculous Stories Concerning the *Kongō hannya-kyō*)<sup>27</sup> was written. Since we respect the documents of foreign lands, should we not also believe and stand in awe of the miraculous events in our own land? Having witnessed these events myself, I cannot remain idle. After long meditation on this, I now break my silence. I have recorded the limited information that has come to me in these three volumes called the *Nihonkoku genpō zen'aku ryōiki*,<sup>28</sup> for future generations.

However, I am not gifted with either wisdom or lucidity. Learning acquired in a narrow well loses its way when out in the open. My work resembles that of a poor craftsman working on the carving of a master. I am afraid that I will cut my hand and suffer from the injury

13. 弘誓願 *guzeigan*; four great vows of bodhisattvas, formulated in reference to the Four Noble Truths in Śākyamuni's teaching. The contents of the vows differ according to various traditions, and the following is widely accepted in the Tendai School: 1. However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them; 2. However inexhaustible cravings are, I vow to extinguish them; 3. However limitless dharma is, I vow to study it; 4. However endless the quest for enlightenment is, I vow to attain it. For the significance of a vow, see M. Anesaki, "Prayer (Buddhist)," *ERE*, X, 166-170.

14. Refers to Emperor Shōmu 聖武, who made a vow in 743 to build a statue of Lochana Buddha in gold and copper but had difficulty in accomplishing it, because the statue was more than fifty feet high. In 749 gold was discovered in Japan for the first time, and eventually the statue was completed with popular support organized by Gyōgi. See Sansom, trans., "The Imperial Edicts in the *Shoku Nihongi*," *TASJ*, Second Series, I (1923-24), 26.

15. 十地 *jūji* (Skt. *daśabhūmi*): the ten stages in the disciplinary process of the bodhisattva; according to the *Kegon-gyō*, they are as follows:

1. <i>paramitā</i> :	stage of joy at benefiting oneself and others;
2. <i>vimalā</i> :	stage of freedom from all possible defilement;
3. <i>prabhākarī</i> :	stage of emission of the light of wisdom;
發光地	
4. <i>arcīsmatī</i> :	stage of glowing wisdom;
焰慧地	
5. <i>sudhīrayā</i> :	stage of overcoming utmost difficulties;
難勝地	
6. <i>abhinokhī</i> :	stage of realization of wisdom;
現前地	
7. <i>śīrangāmā</i> :	stage of proceeding far;
遷行地	
8. <i>acalā</i> :	stage of attainment of immobility;
不動地	
9. <i>sādhumatī</i> :	stage of attainment of expedient wisdom;
善慧地	
10. <i>dharma-meghā</i> :	stage of attainment of ability to spread the teaching.
法雲地	

16. 二乘 *nijō*; *śrāvakayāna*, the path of listeners, and *pratyekabuddhayāna*, the path of solitary Buddha; Mahayana Buddhists place *bodhisattvayāna* beyond these two paths, saying that the goal of these two paths is self-enlightenment while that of the *bodhisattvayāna* is enlightenment for all beings. See III, 38, n. 42.

17. 沙門; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 4.

18. See Chap. I(1)c.

19. 流頭 may be a mis-copying of 臼頭, which is a grinder. Itabashi holds that the script is a combination of water and grinder 硯. In T'ang China, Buddhist monasteries were engaged in milling with grinders 碾 for profit. See Michihata, *Tōdai Bukkyōshi no kenkyū*, 450-452.

20. See I.20; II.9, 32, etc.

21. See I.19; II.7, 11, etc.

22. See I.14, 26, 38; II.21; III.1, 6, etc.

23. See I.31; II.14, 28, 42; III.21, etc.

24. 善惡之報如影隨形。苦樂之響如谷應音。See Chap. I(2)a, n. 139.

25. 漢地 literally means "the land of the Han," that is, China.

26. See Chap. I(1)b, n. 34; Chap. I(2)b.

27. See Chap. I(2)b. 般若驗記, a shortened title of *Kongō hannya-kyō jikkenki*, 3 vols., compiled by Meng Hsien-chung 孟獻忠 in 718 in the reign of Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang dynasty (*Dainihon zokuzō-kyō*, Part II. 乙, case 22: 1).

28. See n. 1, above.



long afterward. My work is comparable to a rough pebble beside the K'un-lun Mountains.<sup>29</sup> Its source in the oral tradition is so indistinct that I am afraid of omitting much. Only the desire to do good has moved me to try, in spite of the fear that this might turn out to be a presumptuous work by an incompetent author. I hope that learned men in future generations will not laugh at my efforts, and I pray that those who happen upon this collection of miraculous stories will put aside evil, live in righteousness, and, without causing evil, practice good.<sup>30</sup>

## I

### On Catching Thunder<sup>1</sup>

Chisakobe no Sugaru 小子部栖輕<sup>2</sup> was a favorite of Emperor Yūryaku 雄略天皇 (called Ōhatsuse-wakatake no sumeramikoto 大泊瀬稚武天皇) who reigned for twenty-three years at the Palace of Asakura in Hatsuse 泊瀬倉宮.<sup>3</sup>

Once the emperor stayed at the Palace of Iware 磐余,<sup>4</sup> and it happened that Sugaru stepped into the Ōyasumidono 大安殿<sup>5</sup> without

29. 崑崙山 a mountain range in Sinkiang province which is famous for jade.

30. 諸惡莫作諸善奉行, a popular maxim found in most Buddhist scriptures.

1. Another version of the same story is found in the *Nihon shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 7:7:3); Aston, "Nihongi," I, 347. The emperor commanded Sugaru to go and seize the kami of Mt. Mimoro. Sugaru climbed the hill and caught a great snake. When he showed it to the emperor, thunder rolled, and its eyeballs flamed. The emperor was frightened and sent it back to Mt. Mimoro, renaming it Ikazuchi, thunder. For a discussion of snake (dragon)-thunder themes, see De Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan*.

2. Chisakobe is a surname, and Sugaru a given name, the latter meaning "wasp." The *Nihon Shoki*, XIV (Yūryaku 6:3:7) gives a story on the origin of Chisakobe; Aston, "Nihongi." Once Emperor Yūryaku (traditionally, 456-479) told Sugaru to collect silkworms (Ja. *kaiko*) in order to encourage court ladies to work for the silk industry. Sugaru collected babies (*kai-ko*) instead of silkworms. The emperor was amused and gave him the title of Chisakobe, literally meaning "little children cooperation." Shida, on the basis of these stories, holds that Sugaru was in charge of preventive magic against thunder and was related to the Hata 秦 family which had immigrated from Silla early in the fifth century and probably taught the Japanese the process for making silk. See his "Chisakobe no seikaku ni tsuite," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 214 (March 1966), 66-79. Naoki says that Sugaru was a royal guard in his "Chisakobe no seishitsu ni tsuite," *Shoku Nihongi kenkyū*, VII (No. 9, September 1960), 225-228.

3. Located in the eastern part of present Sakurai-shi, Nara-ken 奈良縣櫻井市.

4. It may be a detached palace somewhere in present Shiki-gun, Nara-ken; neither the *Kojiki* nor *Nihon shoki* refers to this palace.

5. The main building in the imperial palace during the Asuka and Nara periods; identified by some scholars with the later Daigyokuden 大極殿.

knowing that the emperor lay with the empress there. The emperor, ashamed of his conduct, stopped making love, and it thundered in the heavens. The emperor then said to Sugaru, "Won't you invite the rolling thunder to come here?" "Certainly," answered Sugaru, whereat the emperor commanded him, "Go, invite it here."

Leaving the palace, Sugaru hurried away on horseback, wearing a red headband<sup>6</sup> on his forehead and carrying a halberd with a red banner.<sup>7</sup> He passed the heights of Yamada in the village of Abe<sup>8</sup> and Toyura-dera 豐浦寺,<sup>9</sup> finally arriving at the crossroads of Karu no morokoshi.<sup>10</sup> He cried out: "The emperor has invited the rolling thunder of heaven to his palace." While galloping back to the palace, he asked himself why, even if it were a thunder kami, would it not accept the emperor's invitation.

As he returned, it happened that the lightning struck between Toyura-dera and Ioka 飯岡.<sup>11</sup> On seeing it, Sugaru sent for priests to place the thunder on the portable carriage,<sup>12</sup> and he escorted it to the imperial palace, saying to the emperor, "I have brought the thunder kami." The thunder gave off such a dazzling light that the emperor was terrified. He made many offerings<sup>13</sup> and then had it sent back to the original site, which is called "Hill of Thunder" 雷岡.<sup>14</sup> (It is situated to the north of the Palace of Owarida 小治田 in the old capital.)<sup>15</sup>

After a while Sugaru died. The emperor let the corpse stay, in its coffin for seven days and nights.<sup>16</sup> Then, recalling Sugaru's loyalty, the emperor had a tomb built at the place which had been struck by lightning and had a pillar inscribed: "The tomb of Sugaru who caught the thunder." The thunder was not pleased. It struck the pillar and was caught between the splintered pieces. When emperor heard this,

6. 緋纈 a piece of red cloth tied around the head; also worn by a guard of the land of the dead (II.7). According to Shida, wearing it was a protective measure against thunder ("Chisakobe," 74).

7. 赤幡 竿 a sign of a royal messenger; see n. 6, above.

8. 阿部山田, a village to the south of Mt. Kagu 香具, the eastern part of the present Takechi-gun 高市郡, Nara-ken.

9. Also known as Mukuhara-dera 向原寺 or Kōken-ji 興建寺; a nunnery originally built by Soga no Iname 蘇我稻目 (d. 570) at his residence, which is located at present Asuka-mura, Takechi-gun, Nara-ken.

10. 諸越 morokoshi may be a place name which derived from the intercourse between China and Japan, hence meaning Chinese or trading center.

11. Unidentified local name.

12. 暴籠 *koshiko*; a palanquin made of bamboo.

13. 幣帛 *mitegura*; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 18.

14. A low hill located in the present Asuka-mura on the bank of the Asuka River.

15. Since K'yōkai lived in the late Nara and early Heian periods, "the old capital" refers to the capitals before the Nara period, that is, during the Asuka and Fujiwara periods.

16. See Chap. II(3)a, n. 115.



## Preface to Volume II<sup>1</sup>

After some loyal subjects burned the temple and threw away Buddha images<sup>2</sup> and some built temples to spread the Buddhist teaching,<sup>3</sup> ex-Emperor Shōhō-ōjin-shōmu made a huge image of the Buddha for the first time.<sup>4</sup> He established the eternal Buddhist tradition in this country, shaved his head, and wore a surplice. He was ordained and practiced good, ruling the people with justice. His compassion was extended to animals and plants, while his virtue was incomparable in history. On the throne he attained unity,<sup>5</sup> had excellent fortune, and appeased all spirits, taking his stand on the three components of the universe.<sup>6</sup> Owing to this fortune and virtue, even insects flying in the sky brought grasses to thatch a temple, while ants running on the ground gathered golden sands to build a pagoda. Buddhist banners<sup>7</sup> were raised high with their fringes flying in all directions. The boat of Buddhism floated lightly on the water, and the shadow of the sails seemed to send wind into the sky. Flowers of good omen opened in rivalry here and there, and karmic retribution of good and evil was revealed in lights and shadows. This is why he was named ex-Emperor Shōhō-ōjin-shōmu, meaning Excellent-treasure-truth-corresponding-sacred-power.

. . . incurred much suffering.<sup>8</sup> Evil deeds bring us to lands of suffering, one after another, while good deeds lead us to a safe place. Great compassion can tame and train tigers to sit on our knees;<sup>9</sup> natural affection can make birds live on our head.<sup>10</sup> The same lesson will be found in the episode of the seven virtues of Meng-ch'ang 孟嘗<sup>11</sup> or the three wonders of Prince Kung of Lu 魯恭.<sup>12</sup>

1. The first part of this preface is missing in the existing manuscripts. The opening paragraph in the *Nihon ryōiki* (NKBT) is taken from the *Tōdai-ji yōroku* 東大寺要錄 (II, 2), which gives a quotation probably from this preface (see Nagai Yoshinori, *Nihon Bukkyō bungaku kenkyū*, 139–141).

2. Refers to opponents of Buddhism such as the Monobe family; see I.5.

3. Refers to Buddhists such as the Soga family, Ōtomo no Yasunoko; see I.5.

4. Refers to the Great Buddha of Tōdai-ji; see I.Preface, n. 14. Also see I.5, n. 41.

5. 得一; see I.28, n. 6. Most commentators interpret — as the imperial throne.

6. The three are Heaven, man, and earth.

7. 法幢 *hōdō* or *hatahoko*; see I.1, n. 7.

8. The first part of the sentence is lost: . . . 愛萬苦.

9. See *Shokyō yōshū*, X (*Taishō*, LIV, 100 ab): 所以曇光釋子降孟虎於膝前 螺髻仙人宿禽於頂上.

10. See *ibid.*

11. Minister of Ch'i during the age of the warring states (403–221 B.C.); “seven virtues” 七善, source unknown.

12. See *Hou-Han shu*, XV Biographies. The three wonders 三異 are that even insects do not transgress the border, that even birds and animals can be taught, and that even children have the benevolent mind.



Kyōkai, however, is neither wise nor eloquent. His mind is as slow and dull as a lead sword, and his writings do not seem beautiful. He is as foolish as the man who marked on the boat,<sup>13</sup> and, in writing, he cannot get his phrases into order. However, I cannot suppress my passion to do good, so I dare to write down oral traditions [at the risk of] soiling clean paper with mistakes. On reflection, I cannot help feeling ashamed of myself, blushing in the face and ears. Therefore I beseech you, the reader of my poor work, to confess, forget worldly matters, and keep your mind lofty, making a master of your mind and never the mind your master. By the help of my humble work I hope we shall fly beyond the firmament on the right wing of fortune and virtue and the left wing of wisdom, climb to the top of the Buddha-nature, and attain the path of Buddha, giving alms to all beings.<sup>14</sup>

# I

## On the Death Penalty in This Life for Taking Pride in One's Own Virtue and Hitting a Humble-looking Novice<sup>1</sup>

On the eighth of the second month in the spring of the sixth year of the snake, the first year of the Tenpyō era,<sup>2</sup> ex-Emperor Shōhō-ōjin-shōmu, who reigned over Ōyashima 大八嶋<sup>3</sup> at Nara Palace, made a great vow and held an impressive service to make offerings to the Three Treasures at Gangō-ji 元興寺 on the East Side of the capital.<sup>4</sup> Prince Nagaya 長屋親王, Chancellor of the Senior Second Rank,<sup>5</sup>

13. See *Lü-shih ch'un ch'iu* 呂氏春秋 (Ch'a chin 察今): A man of Ch'u dropped a sword when he was crossing a river. He marked the spot on the edge of the boat where it had fallen overboard for later identification, never thinking that the boat itself was moving.

14. A bodhisattva is often compared to a bird in Mahayana Buddhist scriptures; see *Daichido-ron*, XXXVII (*Taishō*, XXV, 332a). 復次雖有慈悲 般若波羅密 無五神通者 如鳥無兩翼不能高翔; *Ibid.*, XXXVII (*Taishō*, XXV, 566b). 鳥身是菩薩... 無兩翅者是無般若波羅密無方便; *Maka hannya haramitsu-kyō* 摩訶般若波羅密經, XXVI (*Taishō*, XIII, 410c). 譬如鳥無翅不能高翔 菩薩無神通 不能隨意教化衆生。

1. Cf. *Shoku Nihongi*, X (Tenpyō 1:2:10), *Fusō ryakki* (VI, Shōmu), *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XX, 27).

2. 729.

3. According to the *Kojiki* (NKBT, 54-56), Izanagi and Izanami created the eight islands, namely, Awaji Island 淡路島, Iyo Island 伊豫島 (Shikoku 四國), Oki Island 隠岐島, Tsukushi Island 筑紫島 (Kyūshū 九州), Iki Island 壱岐島, Tsushima Island 津島, Sado Island 佐渡島, and Ōyamato-toyoakitsu Island 大倭豊秋津島 (Honshū 本州).

4. See I.3, n. 9.

5. Although the text gives 太政大臣正二位長屋親王, the right title is 正二位左大臣長屋王 (see *Shoku Nihongi*, IX, Jinki 1:2:22), since 親王 is used only for the emperor's sons.

was appointed by edict to be in charge of serving food to the monks.

At the banquet there was a novice unscrupulous enough to go to the serving place and hold up a bowl for food. The prince, when he saw this, struck the novice on the head with an ivory scepter, and blood came from the wound on the head. Wailing bitterly, the novice rubbed his head, wiped away the blood, and disappeared at once. No one knew where he had gone, but both the clergy and laity present at the service whispered in secret, "An ill omen, it is not good."

In two days an envious man went to the throne to slander the prince, saying, "Prince Nagaya is rising in revolt against the state to usurp the throne."<sup>6</sup> The emperor grew angry and sent an army against the prince. Prince Nagaya thought to himself, "I am falsely charged and surely will be killed. It is better to kill myself than to be killed by others." After making his children take poison and strangling them, the prince took the same poison and killed himself.<sup>7</sup> The emperor ordered their corpses thrown out of the castle, burned to ashes, and cast into the waters.<sup>8</sup> Only the prince's bones were exiled to Tosa province 土佐國,<sup>9</sup> where many people died. In fear the people petitioned the officials, saying, "All of us in this province will die because of the prince's spirit!" At this the emperor moved the bones to an island off the coast of Hajikami, Ama district, Kii province 紀伊國海部郡椒抄<sup>10</sup> so that they might lie closer to the capital.

What a pity! However widely known when his fortune was at its height, the prince perished suddenly when an evil fate befell him. Indeed, we learn that, taking pride in his virtue, he struck a novice, and, because of this, divine guardians of dharma frowned on him and good deities hated him.<sup>11</sup> We should respect those who wear a surplice, even if they look humble, for there is a sage hidden among them. Therefore, the *Kyōman-gyō* 僞慢經<sup>12</sup> speaks of "... the sin of those

6. Nuribe no miyatsuko Kimitari 漆部造君足 and Nakatomi no miyatokoro muraji Azumabito 中臣宮處連東人, slandered Prince Nagaya, saying he had secretly studied evil arts and wanted to overthrow the government. See *ibid.*, X (Tenpyō 1:2:10).

7. See *ibid.*, X (Tenpyō 1:2:12).

8. The following passage including this sentence differs from the passage in the *Shoku Nihongi*, which says that Prince Nagaya and Princess Kibi were buried at Ikoma-yama, for she was innocent and he was the grandson of Emperor Tenmu. See *ibid.*, X (Tenpyō 1:2:13).

9. Present Kōchi-ken, Shikoku 四國高知縣.

10. 奥嶋 may be the name of an island, Oki no shima, off the coast of present Kaisō-gun, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣海草郡, or 沖島 *oki no shima* as translated above.

11. 護法善神 *gohō zenjin* means "beneficial deities protecting dharma" but Kyōkai often uses *gohō* without *zenjin*. The *Zenjin* are Brahma, Indra, the Guardians of the Four Quarters, the Twelve Divine Generals, and the Twenty-eight Deities, who vowed to protect dharma after they had heard of it.

12. Unknown source.



## Preface to Volume III<sup>1</sup>

The Inner Scriptures<sup>2</sup> show how good and evil deeds are repaid, while the Outer Writings<sup>3</sup> show how good and bad fortunes bring merit and demerit. If we study all the discourses Śākyamuni made during his lifetime, we learn that there are three periods: first, the period of the true dharma (*shōbō* 正法), which lasts five hundred years; second, the period of the counterfeit dharma (*zōbō* 像法), lasting a thousand years; and third, the period of the degenerate dharma (*mappō* 末法), which continues for ten thousand years. By the fourth year of the hare, the sixth year of the Enryaku era,<sup>4</sup> seventeen hundred and twenty-two years have passed since Buddha entered nirvana.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, we live in the age of the degenerate dharma following the first two periods. Now in Japan, by the sixth year of the Enryaku era, two hundred and thirty-six years have elapsed since the arrival of the Buddha, Dharma, and Samgha.<sup>6</sup> Flowers bloom without voice, and cocks cry without tears. In the present world those who practice good are as few as flowers on rocky hills, but those who do evil are as plentiful as weeds in the soil. Without knowing the law of karmic retribution, one offends as easily as a blind man loses his way. A tiger is known by its tail.<sup>7</sup> Those devoted to fame, profit, and killing doubt the immediate repayment of good and evil which occurs as quickly as a mirror reflects. One who is possessed of an evil spirit is like one who holds a poisonous snake; the poison is always there ready to appear.

The great power of karmic retribution reaches us as quickly as sound echoes in a valley.<sup>8</sup> If we call, the echo never fails to answer, and this is the way karmic retribution works in this life. How can we fail to be more careful? It is useless to repent after spending a lifetime in vain. Who can enjoy immortality since you are given a limited life? How can you depend on your transient life as being eternal? We are already in the age of the degenerate dharma.<sup>9</sup> How can we live with-

1. The Shinpukuji manuscript lacks the first ten lines of the preface. The only extant manuscript which has this paragraph is the Maeda manuscript, and thus this portion is called "Unknown Passage of the Maeda Manuscript." For a discussion of it, see Chap. I(1)b. It consists of one hundred and seventy-seven characters, translated as the first paragraph.

2. 内經 *naikyō*; see I. Preface, n. 1.

3. 外典 *geten*; see I. Preface, n. 2.

4. 787.

5. See Chap. I(1)b, n. 36. The date around 480 B.C. is accepted by most modern scholars.

6. 538 or 552. There is an indication that Kyōkai adopts 552 as the year for the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan.

7. The text may be corrupt.

8. See Chap. I(2)a, n. 139; I. Preface, n. 24.

9. 末劫 *matsugō*; 劫 *kō*, an abbreviated transliteration of Skt. *kalpa*, an astronomical length of time.



out doing good? My heart aches for all beings. How can we be saved from calamity in the age of the degenerate dharma? If we offer monks only a handful of food, the merit of our good deed will save us from the calamity of hunger. If we keep a precept of nonkilling for a day, we will be saved from the calamity of sword and battle.

Once there was a full-fledged monk who lived on a mountain and practiced meditation. At every meal he shared his food with a crow which came to him every day. After a vegetarian meal, he chewed a toothpick,<sup>10</sup> cleaned his mouth, washed his hands and played with a stone. The crow was behind the hedge when he threw the stone. He hit the crow without knowing that it was there. The crow died on the spot, its head crushed into pieces, and was reborn as a boar. The boar lived in the same mountain as the monk. It happened to go to the place above his hut, rooting about among the rocks for food, whereupon one of the rocks rolled down and killed the monk. Although the boar had no intention of killing him, the rock rolled down by itself. A sin committed by an action which is neither good nor bad<sup>11</sup> will in turn generate the same kind of action. In the case of intentional murder, how is it possible to escape the penalty? A deluded mind produces the seed and fruit of evil; an enlightened mind produces the seed of good to attain Buddhahood.

I, the mediocre monk Kyōkai, have not studied enough to ask questions in the manner of the Tendai Sage.<sup>12</sup> Nor am I sufficiently enlightened to answer in the manner of holy and eloquent men.<sup>13</sup> My efforts are like bailing water out of the ocean with a shell or looking at the sky through a straw. Though I am not an eminent monk who transmits the light of dharma<sup>14</sup> I try hard to meditate on it, following the path to the pure land and directing the mind toward enlightenment. I repent of my previous misdeeds and pray for future good. By editing these stories of miraculous events I want to pull the people forward by the ears, offer my hand to lead them to good, and show them how to cleanse their feet of evil. My sincere hope is that we may all be reborn in the western land of bliss, leaving no one on the earth, and live together in the jeweled palace in heaven, abandoning our earthly residence.

10. See I.26, n. 5.

11. 無記 *muki*. This story may have originated in the *Bonmō-kyō bosatsukaihon-sho* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏 (*Taishō*, XL, 611), according to Haraguchi ("Nihon ryōiki shūten goku kanken," *Kuntengo*, No. 34, 61-62).

12. 天台智者; see Chap. I(1)b, n. 51.

13. 神人辯者.

14. 傳燈良匠.

# I

## On the Tongues of the Reciters of the Hoke-kyō Which Did Not Decay in the Skulls Exposed to the Elements<sup>1</sup>

In the reign of Empress Abe 帝姬阿倍天皇<sup>2</sup> who governed Ōyashima<sup>3</sup> at Nara Palace, there was a monk, Dhyāna Master Eigō 永興<sup>4</sup> in the village of Kumano in Muro district, Kii province 紀伊國牟婁郡熊野村.<sup>5</sup> He taught and guided the people by the sea. His contemporaries revered him as a bodhisattva, respecting his self-discipline.<sup>6</sup> As he lived in a place south of the imperial capital, he was called the Bodhisattva of the South 南菩薩.<sup>7</sup>

Once a *dhyāna* master came to the bodhisattva. He had with him a copy of the *Hoke-kyō* (written with very small characters in one scroll),<sup>8</sup> a pewter pitcher, and a stool made of rope.<sup>9</sup> He used to recite the *Hoke-kyō* constantly. After one year or so, he thought of leaving Dhyāna Master Eigō, and with a bow presented his stool as an offering, saying, "I am leaving you and going into the mountains to cross over to Ise province 伊勢國."<sup>10</sup> Hearing this, the master gave him one bushel of ground dry glutinous rice, and had two lay brothers accompany him to see him on his way. After having been escorted for a day, he gave them his *Hoke-kyō*, bowl, and ground dry rice, and sent them back, while he continued with only twenty yards of hemp rope and a pewter pitcher.

After two years had passed, the villagers of Kumano went up to a mountain by the upper stream of the Kumano to cut down trees

1. This section consists of two independent stories on the same motif of the "singing skull." See Chap. II(1)b, n. 41, and (3)a. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 31), *Genkō shakusho* (XXIX, 3).

2. Teiki Abe no sumeramikoto, that is, Empress Kōken 孝謙 (r. 749-757) or Shōtoku 稱徳 (r. 764-770), twice enthroned. It is hard to know whether this story should be dated in her first or second reign.

3. See II.1, n. 3.

4. See III.2, nn. 3, 4, 5. Also see the *Shoku Nihongi*, XXXII (Hōki 3:3:6). He was appointed as one of the ten *dhyāna* masters in 772.

5. In the vicinity of present Shingū-shi, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣新宮市.

6. 行 *gyō*.

7. Minami no bosatsu.

8. Kyōkai's note.

9. Monks are allowed to possess and carry scriptures, a begging bowl, a pitcher of water for drinking and washing, a stick, a toothpick, a stool made of rope, etc. in traveling. In the Mahayana tradition, the number of such items is eighteen (十八物 *jūhachimotsu*).

10. Present Mie-ken 三重縣.